

COMING UP THE ROAD

*Memories of
a North Country Boyhood*

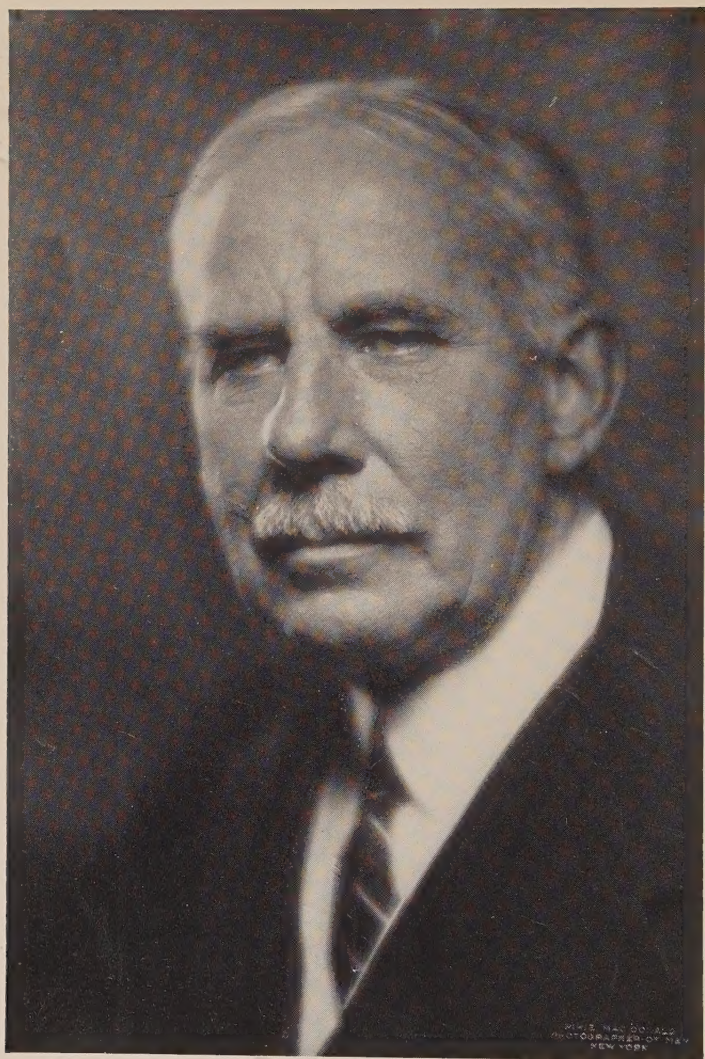
Irving Bacheller



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COMING UP THE ROAD



IRVING BACHELLER



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Memories of a North Country Boyhood

By
Irving Bacheller

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In silence we must wrap
much of our life because
it is too fine for speech,
because also we cannot
explain it to others and
some of it we cannot un-
derstand.

— *Emerson's Journal*

Indianapolis

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I I FIND MYSELF IN PARADISE VALLEY	11
II THE CHARACTERS AND DIVERSIONS OF PARADISE VALLEY	41
III THE SUGARING AND SUMMER PLAY	49
IV MY IMAGINATION BEGINS ITS SAD CAREER	65
V WE GO A-SUCKERING	76
VI I LEAVE HOME TO WORK IN A STORE	90
VII IN A MUSEUM OF CHARACTERS . .	102
VIII MY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVENTURES IN THE RURAL VILLAGE WHERE I SPENT MY YOUTH	117
IX I TRY NEW THINGS AND STRANGE ADVENTURES	137
X A SUMMER OF STRANGE ADVENTURES	156
XI BACK HOME AGAIN	177
XII KEEPING IN THE MAIN ROAD AND ACQUIRING A TASTE FOR GOOD LITERATURE	191
XIII I BEGIN A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISH- MENT	210
XIV THE HIGH-BROW DECADE . . .	267

FOREWORD

I am aware that my accomplishments are of slight importance. But in these days of my coming up the road are events and characters and a spirit which have had some part in the making of a great nation and of the more abundant life which its people now enjoy.

I. B.

COMING UP THE ROAD

COMING UP THE ROAD

CHAPTER I

I FIND MYSELF IN PARADISE VALLEY

I WAS another. The news was shouted from field to field, I doubt not, until it had crossed Paradise Valley.

Another child had come to the little house on Waterman Hill. Five had preceded me, all alive, the oldest twelve years of age. As I think of it I can hear the talk about me and my overworked mother in that little lonely neighborhood where there were only five families within a mile of one another.

The scourge of war fell upon the land soon after I did. I was the sixth in a large brood of children and the Uncivil War was fourth in our country's family of troubles. For more than twenty years High Taxes, Hard Times and I walked side by side and left much trouble behind us.

A blue-eyed pilgrim-stranger, I arrived among hard-handed Yankee folk in the fertile valley of

COMING UP THE ROAD

the St. Lawrence just north of the Adirondack wilderness. It was a long, bouldered valley sloping northward from the foot-hills. As to the boulders the geologists say that a vast prehistoric ship of ice, moving slowly from the Arctic Circle, had been stopped by a high mountain range and had rotted in the sunlight. There on the hillsides and in the valleys it had left its far-come cargo.

I came to a small house on the top of a great hill. From a part of its summit one looked across the whole timbered breadth of the valley to the smoky St. Lawrence, more than twenty-five miles north of us. The date was September 26, 1859. Almost the first thing I came to know was the legend among the children that Mr. Bellows—a white-bearded neighbor—had brought me over the hills in a basket. I wondered if he was the Baby Carrier for the whole neighborhood and if that was the reason why he looked so bent and red in the face.

Those Yankees from New England were a people apart. Pioneers in the first westward movement, they were shut off from the rest of the world by the mountains and the wilderness and the water boundaries of an alien land. There they kept their dialect, their customs and the simplicity of the old time.

Their spirit was changing. Ebenezer Fisher and

John S. Lee—men of learning and strong character—had come among them preaching the doctrine that all souls were eventually to be saved and founding a university at the county-seat. Many had accepted their faith. That little colony of New Englanders had begun to cheer up.

Many had sought the favor of God by inflicting scripture names upon their children. It hadn't worked. Zeb had been no better and not a whit luckier than Bill. Jonathan Bullis had suggested that I be named Solomon. My mother, who bore the name of Achsah, saved me from a like misfortune. She chose for me modern names, burdened with a connotation too illustrious, namely: Addison Irving. I do not think that I had an illustrious look—not those days—but the truth is that my mother had a great admiration for the writings of Joseph Addison and Washington Irving. So I got it.

Those people still suffered from the three robber barons who had so afflicted their fathers—Disease, Pain and Decay. Men and women were old at fifty. Three years before I was born, a man had to be strapped down for any surgical operation. It was indeed a vale of hardship and tears. But when I entered it, the people were drying their eyes. The mournful poetry of Issac Watts no longer voiced the spirit of the caravan. The men

and women I knew in my youth were a cheerful lot not much worried about their souls, I would say. Their bodies were still a rather fleeting asset. Death had many active agents. Diphtheria, consumption, diabetes, were the ablest of them.

I must have been like the traditional cricket on the hearth. Always I have been happier than I had a right to be, I would say as I look backward. My earliest recollection is of sitting and singing in my little rocker and being chided by Grandma Dumas or my mother for the noise I made.

Grandma Dumas—a cheerful French woman from Canada—was my mother's hired helper. She had a loose front tooth and rhythmically stirred it with her tongue as she knitted. Watching this process was one of my earliest amusements. Another was drawing cats and dogs and ships on a slate after patterns made by my mother.

I remember my first day in school and especially my timidity in the presence of the teacher and of those older boys and girls who were constantly staring into my face and lifting me up and laughing at me. I regarded them with fear and suspicion. Indeed, I had come to a point in my career when I felt entitled to more respect.

I had learned my letters and made a degree of progress in spelling at home. I was the only mem-

ber of my class and when I stood by the teacher's knee to recite, my ear was opposite the watch in her belt, and its ticking so distracted my attention that she put it on the desk. I began my reading with that difficult proposition, spelling each word before I pronounced it:

"The sun is up and it is day."

That, I think, is the first printed fact which had entered my intellect. My father was wont to hold me on his knee and teach me spelling. He made great ado over my alleged precocity.

When I was eight years old I became a candidate for president of the United States. I had not sought the honor. It was thrust upon me. I was born in the land of Silas Wright, an illustrious and modest statesman, of whom Senator Benton had said that he spent more time in declining honors than have others in trying to secure them. He had declined to be nominated for president by the Baltimore convention of 1844. This had deeply impressed his fellow citizens of the north country. Wright had lived a simple unpretentious life among them. He went about with his wheelbarrow, working in his garden or on the road with his spade and shovel, just like the rest of them, when he returned from his seat in the Senate at Washington where his influence was probably

greater than that of Webster or Clay. Those farmer-folk did not realize how noble and rare were those qualities of intellect and spirit which their simple neighbor possessed. My father said that if I kept my heart as clean and honest as that of Governor Wright I could be president.

So I entered into a kind of contest with the great Commoner in the gentle art of being good. I could not keep up with him. I no sooner mastered the theory and technique of one of his virtues than he assumed another. This was his crowning accomplishment. The distinguished governor used to get up at daylight and spend an hour pulling weeds in the garden before breakfast. He had been put in his grave fourteen years before I was born. I thought that I knew why he was dead.

I have since learned that in keeping the ten commandments no live man can compete with a dead one.

There were other boy candidates for president in the neighborhood. We got together one day at noon recess and discussed the issues. We were sick of the campaign. We withdrew, as it were. Sedition was in our midst. We ran away from school and spent a delightful afternoon in the old swimmin' hole and eating choke cherries.

Next morning I arose at breakfast-time. They had not called me as they had been wont to do.

There was an atmosphere of depression in the house. Not much was said, but I could feel deep undercurrents of thought going around the breakfast table. I began to suspect that the teacher had been there—to feel in the dead calm of the situation an approaching storm.

Breakfast over, my father gently remarked as he looked at me:

“I thought that you intended to be president.”

I told him that I had done so but had given up.

He said, “Will you please come with me?”

I went. It was a beautiful summer morning as calm as he. I shall never forget the look of that little squirrel sitting in the top of one of the small evergreens peering down at me, wistfully, as if he had a hole to recommend. We went down the garden path and out under the orchard boughs. Not a word was spoken. My father cut a sprout from one of the trees and then another and trimmed them as he walked. Deep in the orchard we stopped.

“I suppose you know the object of this meeting,” said my father.

I did not speak.

“It is to renominate you for president,” he declared.

Just then we heard the voice of a boy yelling about an eighth of a mile down the valley.

COMING UP THE ROAD

I knew that it was the voice of an ex-candidate resuming the ardors of the campaign.

In a minute he knew that I was with him.

I was about eight years old when I made my first journey alone in the world. It was a journey of three miles from our house to Pierpont Center on the back of old Jim—a wise and aged horse. After twenty years of active life the perils of this world did not concern him. He was without vanity or pride or the love of adventure. My father put on the blanket and surcingle and helped me to my seat. I needed no saddle. What a delightful sense of maturity was mine when I set out on my journey, my small legs rather widely spread. A cow in the road galloped on ahead and whirled, jumping up and down with lifted tail in front of old Jim. I was indignant at being subjected to such ridicule. I learned in my youth that some cows have the gift of humor. I have known many talented cows.

The unchanging, slow walk of old Jim, carried me along that familiar road past the Northrup schoolhouse and Alson Crary's and Perley Andrews' into the hamlet of Pierpont Center. I was alone—my own master on that little journey. I talked to myself of my new position in the world. I tried to hurry my steed with the switch in my

hand. He took it good-naturedly, feigning respect for my effort, but was not much moved by it.

Ben Hubbard's store was a small and rather shabby establishment, but it had a kind of grandeur that day with its shiny trinkets, alluring colors and enchanting odors. Never have I met a man who so richly deserved the title of merchant prince as its proprietor. The look of him cast me down to a state of low humility. In a timid voice, just above a whisper, I asked for the mail and the price of the striped sticks of candy. Three of the latter were in my possession when I brought Old Jim to the side of the steps and mounted him for my homeward journey.

Would I eat the candy or keep it to be shown to my mother and my next older brother whose envy would be a pleasure to me? That was my problem as I rode over hill and vale in the late, warm, sunny afternoon. I decided on the latter course, but soon compromised with myself by eating half of one stick.

I was a blasé, swaggering, boastful creature among my mates for a time after that.

Across a narrow meadow flat in front of our new brick house in the valley was a wooded ledge which yielded strange echoes. It was to me the home of mystery, of some spirit that watched our play and loved the sound of our voices. Our words

came back down from the heights as we shouted in the still gray dusk of the early evening. Even the bellowing of the night-hawks plunging downward in their frolic above our heads was answered by the great ledge. I remember an evening soon after darkness had fallen when we heard a strange voice calling aloud to God in front of our house and the ledge answering. The men went out and found old Paddy Farrell who, returning from the village drunk, was on his knees in the road praying.

We had a hired man every summer of whom I entertained a most favorable opinion. He was a bit undersized, of middle age with dark eyes and hair and small tufts in front of his ears. He came from a little farm in Pleasant Valley some ten miles south of us in the town of Russell. He brought a flute with him and had some skill in playing it. He sang merry songs and cracked jokes and told stories. Noon and night he came in from the fields, chatting and laughing with the men. Before I was old enough to appreciate his wit I felt the magnetism of his personality and loved to follow him as he worked. I remember how he would chat with himself and chuckle and laugh as he raked hay or grain apart from the others. This habit of his interested me. I would stand near curiously watching the man and wondering what was the cause of his fun. This, I doubt not,

annoyed him a little for he was wont to say to me:

"Now, Bub, hurry back to the house, I think that yer mother has got some sweet cakes fer ye."

I knew that he was fond of children,—of which, up in Pleasant Valley, he had a number of his own,—instinctively I knew it and also that I was fond of him, and I obeyed him with slow feet.

In the late summer and early autumn evenings he would go out coon-hunting with my older brothers and our faithful shepherd-dog. For days I would hear echoes of their great adventure in the night mostly mingled with laughter.

Meal-times he would now and then set the table in a roar with some jest or story. How often I stood by his knee, evenings or Sunday afternoons on the little veranda while he played on his flute or sang his merry songs to speed the hours of leisure! Now and then the music would cease and he would start a laugh among his listeners with some anecdote. I remember one of them. It came of the remark that I would soon be big enough to play the flute.

The genial hired man laughed as he said: "That reminds me of old Uncle Rat Andrews. He says to his wife one day, says he: 'Mary you're big enough to break the bay colt.' She says to him: 'A cow is big enough to catch a mouse but I never heard of any one usin' a cow for that purpose.'"

"Uncle Sam Miner," as he was called, has been lying in his grave these many years, but he has never ceased to be working for me. He is the most profitable hired man I have known. His spirit has traveled around the world and is still alive and active.

There was another—a mystical character—who had an effect on my imagination those days. He was my Uncle Loren whom I had never seen and whom, indeed, I was never to see. He was a brother of my mother who had gone to California probably in the middle 'forties. He had come, when I was a child in arms, to visit my mother with tales of perilous adventure and nuggets of gold in his pockets. He had stayed a while and then had returned to that far, mysterious land. What a magnificent, legendary figure, clad in purple and fine linen, was he in the imagination of my older brothers and sisters! I was always dreaming of the day when our Uncle Loren would return to us and I should behold the splendor of his person.

I remember a summer day, when I sat with a number of my schoolmates who were boasting of their uncles. I listened with interest to Salona Enslow's account of her Uncle Silas who had a wooden leg and a silver breastpin and a bullet buried in his arm which you could feel between your thumb and finger—possessions not to be light-

ly regarded. I felt, for a moment, a sense of discouragement. But when I told of the gold ring and nuggets and silk vest of my Uncle Loren and of his home in California and of his lying hidden in a field of grain when bandits had come to rob and slay him, I opened their mouths with astonishment.

Thirty-five years passed. I was a man of middle age. On a railroad train I found myself sitting with a distinguished churchman—the bishop of the diocese of southern California. If I remember rightly, his name was Brewer. I asked if, by chance, he knew my sublime Uncle Loren Buckland and told the name of the town where his last letter had been dated.

Yes, the bishop knew him. For years he had lived the life of a hermit in a little cabin where, in pathetic loneliness, old age and death had come to him. He had left nothing but his rifle and a few things of no value. I think that the church had buried him although the good bishop did not tell me that.

My Uncle Loren's dream, like my own, had ended in ashes. Failure had come to him and he had been too proud to shatter the impression of grandeur which he had left with us. *Sic transit gloria!* I said nothing of this until my mother had passed away.

One day a pretty miss came down from Pierpont Center to play with me. She was the daughter of the richest man in the township. I remember that she was all dressed up. Her pretty buttoned shoes made me ashamed of my bare brown feet. When we played croquet together, her red cheeks and bright eyes and dark wavy hair and smiling face started in me a vibration which I had not felt before. Those few hours filled many days with their riches. They were the beginning of a great experience.

I dimly remember when my sister Sarah was married. I didn't know what it meant to be married. I thought from all the jollity and joking and laughing that it must be a very funny adventure. Great preparations were made for the return of my sister and her husband from their wedding journey. The neighborhood came to welcome them and young and old danced while Orlo Western played his violin and "called off." I sat up to watch the capering with heavy eyes and proudly heard the clock strike midnight for the first time in my life.

The newly married couple slept in the spare room. How they were petted and humored and fed! What a variety of cakes and jellies and pies at dinner and supper! I decided that I wanted to be married. My sister Sarah was a comely,

vivacious girl of twenty. The young couple went to live in the city of Auburn more than a hundred miles south of us.

The fiddler, Orlo Western, often came to our house with his violin, staying for days and amusing the family with the magic in his bow and fingers. He limped, with one leg a bit shorter than the other, and spoke through his nose from some defect in his larynx. He was a clean-minded, kindly, decent man. For a time he was my great hero. I actually imitated his limp and his manner of speech among my schoolmates.

Every boy must have a hero, and in time Orlo had to yield his place to Nelson Parmenter—a big, brawny, homely, awkward man. He was a renowned penman. His birds and swans, bearing scrolls in their beaks and set in graceful, picturesque and redundant flourishes, were hung at fair-time in Floral Hall where always a crowding group surveyed them with exclamations of astonishment. By and by he came to our neighborhood to teach a writing school. I was his most successful and interested pupil. When I was a lad of eleven my graceful penmanship and impossible birds and evenly shaded flourishes became almost as celebrated as those of my master.

Fortunately, my enthusiasm for flourishing came early and had spent itself before I was

twenty-one. However, like my friends, Eugene Field and Clinton Scollard and James Whitcomb Riley, I have kept a monkish love for the making of a clear, legible and comely script. It has always been necessary for my outer and inner eye to be pleased with every detail in the dress of these children of my fancy. To me a slovenly script that taxes the eye of the reader is like a slovenly manner of speech that taxes the ear of one to whom it is addressed. It is like a husky, ill-trained voice and slighted articulation.

There were characters in the environment of my boyhood whom I recall with less enthusiasm. There was the wild Frenchman who came to do the butchering. He came in a clattering buckboard, one foot on the dash behind a lashed and lathered horse. His threatening manner, his sharp knives, his loud profanity, were a new kind of terror to me. He seemed to enjoy the fear of children.

We little lads stood trembling while we looked out of the window and saw the great hogs driven out of their pen, thrown upon their sides and stabbed with the long knife. The tortured beast blew his trumpet with all the power in his body. What a shrieking, terrible blast of sound rushed down the valley—like the whistling of a locomotive—and what a stream of blood came from his throat as he rose staggering to his death!

IN PARADISE VALLEY

So I, accustomed only to gentle hands and voices and soft beds and pleasant dreams, began to see the sterner side of living—the cruel tragedies, the dark shadows in the background of the farm. I remember how my brother Burton and I used to hide the beautiful calves that were doomed to die to save them. Soon I was to hear often the foul talk of brutal men who had their part in our labor and to wonder about it. I wonder now that while I heard and saw these things I was as one apart from them until a day at school when I had a desperate and bloody battle with Edwin Austin. He was bigger than I and a bit of a bully. As my anger rose, the big round oaths that came from my mouth astonished me and my friends. What an unsuspected storehouse of profane and violent words was my memory!

In the heat of those few moments the innocence of childhood had been quite destroyed, but I had risen to the rank of a hero in the estimation of the other boys. Thereafter, I was treated with respect.

Now and then of a summer Sunday, Elder Whitfield or Elder Pangborn came to preach in the schoolhouse. What a melancholy stillness was in and around the house those Sunday mornings! Men who were generally kind were stern that day when they stropped their razors and lathered their faces. We were carefully washed and dressed in

clothes made by my mother and the dressmaker and in shoes or fine boots that fitted too snugly, our lower members having grown since they had been put aside. We sat on the hard benches over burning, aching feet while the fat and wheezy Mr. Whitfield or the dark-bearded, hesitating Mr. Pangborn read and prayed and preached.

I could more easily comprehend the neighing of the horses hitched to the fence on a side of the schoolyard for they voiced with great success the wretchedness of my spirit. I was in sore need of the mercy of God for which, I doubt not, those gentlemen were praying.

I enjoyed the school lyceums in winter when the "big guns" of the countryside came to debate and resolve upon questions of this character: Has intemperance caused more misery than war? or, Did Columbus deserve more credit for discovering America than Washington for defending it?

Ezra Crary, from a neighborhood three miles south of us, was a man of some learning, dignity and eloquence. His tone was judicial, his words well chosen. Even I, a young lad, was able to understand him. Mr. Hunt, a white-haired man from six miles down the Potsdam road, brought volumes of history with which to enforce his arguments. Austin Lobdell was the clown of the neighborhood. He was sure to keep the crowd

laughing with his face which always looked as if he had been tasting aloes, and with his awkward gestures and droll remarks and still droller dialect.

Often Carlyle Barber, a war veteran, would be called upon to sing his one comic, rig-a-dig song. He did it with a display of energy like that of a man fighting bees. The roars of laughter gave him, here and there, needed rest as the song went on. He left the improvised stage, red and perspiring.

There were tableaux in which the more comely girls appeared. I recall that *Night* was represented by a pretty brunette in a black robe with a silver crescent moon and a golden star above her brow.

The young men spoke pieces and after the entertainment they were sure to linger in the moonlit schoolyard for wrestling bouts on the snow, there being strong rivalry in this manly art between the Plains District, the Northrup District and our own. The winner of each bout "called in" the man who was to oppose him in the next one. The contests proceeded in a friendly spirit between these big brawny youths. Ardell Bellows, a blond Hercules of our own district, was sure to throw all his adversaries.

The singing school was another improving diversion of young and old. It was taught by Merrill Crandall—a large man of about thirty—pompous, erect, dignified, with a long brown mustache. He

COMING UP THE ROAD

had an impressive manner as he stood before the class of tenors, sopranos, altos and basses, his tuning-fork in his right hand, the singing book in the other. I used to wonder why he bit the tuning-fork and held it to his ear and murmured tune-fully:

“Do, me, sol, do.”

He gave the pitch, seized his ruler and rhythmically beat the air, first downward and to the left and right as he indicated the time, saying:

“One, two, three, ready, sing:”

Then the trouble began as every one jumped aboard. I remember well the inane song accompanied by the movements of the ruler.

“Listen to the bird, and the maid and the
humble bee

Tra-la-la-la-la! tra-la-la-la-la!

Joyfully we sing the gladsome melody

Tra la la la la.

Merrily and cheerily we roll along, roll
along, roll along,

Merrily and cheerily we roll along,

Sing hey to the God of day.”

I used to wonder at the bravery of those people who were willing to stand up and make such a noise about rolling along. Why did they do it? What was the meaning of *tra* and *la* and what did it mean to sing *hay*? Was it because it was better than straw?

I now wonder why this twaddle should stick in my memory as a burr clings to one's garment. Was it because of my studious thought of it as a child?

There was not, in the land I knew as a boy, the like of my three older brothers. They were physically a stalwart trio and learning was easy for them. I was fortunate in having for a comrade, adviser and friend in a part of my boyhood, my brother Burton, four years older than I—a handsome lad of a noble spirit. My love of boys is largely due to my recollection of his honesty and faithfulness in his part of the work, of his quaintly humorous and friendly manner of speech, of his manly heart, of the beauty of his face and person.

I recall that he used to say to me when we were shelling corn or sorting potatoes together:

"Those plains boys swear a good deal. They say 'them things' instead of 'those things.' You and I must remember that we are not boys of that kind."

He was my steady hero and a brother to whom it would be difficult to measure my debt.

Our Uncle Charles,—a brother of my father,—who lived in town and spent his winters in Washington, came, now and then, for an hour or two with us. His grandeur overawed me. He wore

spotless linen and new and well-cut garments. He spoke in a deep sonorous voice of great men and great events. Moreover, there were rattling coins in his trousers pocket and once I had seen him take a shiny penknife, with gleaming pearl panels on its sides, from that store of treasures. How that endeared him to me! I longed to hold the knife in my hand but was too timid to ask for the sacred privilege. Silently I followed him about, as he talked with my father, feeling immensely enriched by the knowledge that he was in a sense *mine*. We young boys were lonely when he went away.

Fair-time was in September. There were seven of us children. Some could go on the second day, some on the third. There were from thirty to forty cows to be milked. I was about ten years of age when it became my duty to go down in the great pasture, night and morning, with our shepherd-dog to get the cows. We boys slept together in a room above stairs. I was dragged and shaken out of my dreams by my older brothers about daylight. We dressed hurriedly. Each had his task—cleaning the stables, feeding, watering and currying the horses, filling the wood-box, feeding the chickens, bringing fresh water from the well.

All this began early in fair-time and was done with unusual haste. I ran down the sloping cow-paths in the gray dawn calling loudly, “Co’ bos,

co' bos, co' bos," while old Curly ran on ahead of me to seek out the herd and gather it. In a moment or two I would hear the cattle answering, here and there, in the dim, broad, sloping field as if they were saying: "What's the matter now? It's hardly daylight."

Soon they would come lowing up the paths, their hoofs rumbling on the hard earth. I can remember the sweetness of their breaths when they crowded by me. As the light grew I could see the grass all white with frost. Then I knew the reason for that ache in my bare feet. How grateful was the feel of those warm places where the cows had lain!

In breathless haste we did the milking. The filled cans were rushed to the factory. We washed and ate hurriedly. It was a great hardship to stand by the wash basin and have my neck and ears and feet scrubbed while the other boys were dressing above stairs. It was such a waste of time! Then, my Sunday clothes and infant's collar—what a humiliation was that!—and the new boots. In them I felt a great pride although my feet were not quite happy, but who would stop to think of such a trifle at fair-time?

My grandfather, who, with much beautiful, old furniture, had come from Springfield, Massachusetts, to live with us, could take care of my younger brother while we were gone. Uncle Miner and the

big boys set out with the team and two-seated wagon. I went with my father and mother in the top-buggy behind our fast road mare. The sun was shining warm. I remember that birds were singing as we climbed the hill. A continuous, mournful chanting of crickets and katydids came out of the shorn fields.

I was silent, thoughtful, as I faced the great adventure, my mind full of strange fancies.

I was thinking of the brave things I would do. One of them was this. I was firmly resolved to spend five cents of my money in shooting the wonderful air-gun at a bull's eye that rang when you hit it. I would also buy three peaches,—maybe four,—a bag of peanuts and some gingerbread. If I saw a monkey or maybe an elephant, I would give him one of the peanuts.

There from the far side of the hilltop were the hazy reaches of the great valley with its patches of timber land and its houses and villages dim in the distance. Always it caught my interest.

"Do you see the smoke away off yonder?" my father would ask as he pointed with his whip. "That's the smoke of a steamer on the St. Lawrence [twenty-four miles from us], and where you see that blotch of buildings—that's Canton [six miles], and if you look yonder you can just see the steeples of Potsdam [fourteen miles]."

There was a cloud of dust above the main road down in the valley. Top-buggies, double wagons, even lumber wagons with kitchen chairs in them, loaded with young and old, were coming down from the back country. Below the hill they speeded through sand flats and rattled over stony levels filling the air with dust. It was a narrow, toilsome road. Now and then eager, reckless young men would swing to the ditch and run their horses to get by, yelling with a note of good nature in their voices.

My father and mother would be talking of their affairs. I think that they were both weary of pioneering in a somewhat rigorous climate. I am sure that it had been a sterner business than they had expected—this matter of going west into a new country and raising a family and making a farm and a living on rooty, rocky acres. Hard times had followed the Civil War. Taxes were high and prices low. A farm in the St. Lawrence Valley seven miles from a town was about as salable those days as the same amount of terra firma in Labrador.

“If I could sell the farm and stock, we would go west to Iowa or maybe to Kansas,” said my father. “They say that the land is rich and cheap and that there isn’t a stick or a stone in your way.”

“Would we go on the cars?” I asked.

"Yes, my son."

That settled it. I was strongly in favor of the plan. Going to Iowa or Kansas became a dream of my life.

When we got to town, the streets were crowded with vehicles so that we could only creep along toward the fair-grounds. As we came into Canton, the big brick building on the right always caught and held my eye until we had passed, because of its prodigious size. No doubt had I that it was the biggest building in the world.

"That is the college," said my father. "I hope you will be going there when you're old enough."

I did not know what it meant to go to college, but the seed thus casually sown was to take root and grow in me.

What a neighing of horses in the crowded village and especially of sleek-coated prancing stallions! I wonder if certain members of that great assemblage of handsome, well-bred steeds were recognizing and calling to old friends or were they merely indulging in gay cavalier compliments?

It was a land of well-bred horses. The Baron of Stonehenge, the Van Renssalaers, the Lafarges, the Comte de Chaumont and other grand folk who settled in that country, long before there were gentlemen of leisure in New York, had imported from Europe some of the best strains of blood in

horses and hounds. The descendants of the former had been crossed with the proud and famous horses bred by Justin Morgan of Vermont.

What a babel of voices on every side! The town marshal, mounted, with a ribbon on the lapel of his coat, was riding up and down beside the caravan giving orders in a loud piping voice.

"It's Dunk Robertson!" my father exclaimed.

That name was immediately inscribed in my hall of fame although his voice was in the nature of a blemish. Still I was sure that he was the greatest man in the world.

How rude, how excited, how stern were the officers of the day at the gate! I saw my father pay for our tickets the great sum of seventy-five cents. I knew then that he must be rich for his wallet was crowded with dollar bills and shinplasters.

At last we entered the fair-grounds. Men were shouting about peaches and lemonade and luncheons, about shooting-galleries, wild men of Australia, the fat lady, the living skeleton and like wonders. Violins, bagpipes, accordions and squawking toy balloons were other items in the tumult. We found a place for our horse and carriage and set out to see and admire.

The crowd and the noise overawed me while it filled me with a deep satisfaction. I was afraid of getting lost, so I took such a firm grip on my

COMING UP THE ROAD

father's hand that he complained of it. There were so many things to see that I could not get half enough of any one of them before I had to move on to keep up with my mother and father. There was a man who stood before a tent, solemnly swallowing a sword while another at his side told of more wonderful things to be seen inside the tent. Now that was a matter which, in my view, was worthy of serious attention. But my elders did not agree with me.

I shot away my five cents and bought three peaches, a bag of peanuts and a piece of gingerbread. I ate the peaches at once. My money was gone, but I cherished the hope that my father would buy a glass of pop for me. In this I was disappointed, although the hope lingered in my breast until we went away.

We proceeded to Floral Hall and admired the flourishes of Nelson Parmenter and the paintings of Mrs. Lee and many specimens of needlework in which I felt no interest. We heard a man playing on a big shiny thing which my mother said was "a piano." It thrilled and awed me. I had thought that our melodeon was a very grand and wonderful possession. Young as I was, I had realized that our unrivaled social position in Paradise Valley was partly due to it. But now I had a kind of bitter sense of inferiority—of a loss of pride.

On a booth-side was a printed sign which said: "Look out for pickpockets."

My mother explained the meaning of the sign. It thrilled me and excited my caution so that I kept my hand on my pocket wherein my peanuts and a quarter-loaf of gingerbread were stored.

I went with my parents to see the fruits and vegetables, the pigs and cattle, the reapers, mowers, churns and washing-machines. I looked in vain for an elephant or a monkey. It was to me time thrown away. I had no interest in such things, with guns to be shot off and sword swallows and living skeletons and wild men of Australia to be seen and pop a possibility of the immediate future.

We went to a tent and had our dinner—a good dinner of meat and vegetables and pie. We got our carriage and drove to a place near the fenced track opposite the grand stand where my parents could get a fairly good view of the races. The sun shone hot. The day was still and hazy. I was weary. My head ached. My feet were too confined. The peanuts, peaches, gingerbread and pie which I had consumed were also complaining of confinement. As we waited in the heat, I fell asleep and dreamed that I had swallowed a sword. The racing did not interest me. My head was down rather low and there were so many people and parasols and other objects in the way. I got only,

now and then, a glimpse of it. But the men who sat on the sulkies!—their grandeur I have never forgotten.

In the late afternoon before the races ended, as we were leaving our place, I, seeing it was my last chance, timidly suggested that we had not seen the Australian wild men and the living skeleton. My longing for pop had vanished.

“I think that we have seen enough for to-day,” my father answered.

I knew it was true. My eyes had been overworked. So had my legs and my stomach. I said nothing. Still, as long as I could stand on my feet, I would have gone to see the Australian wild men.

We set out for home well ahead of the crowd. I was sick and weary. We drove toward the high hill in deepening shadows. I remember the steady creaking of the evener on the sandy flats above Little River Bridge. Hearing it, sleep came to my relief. The dusk was falling when my father lifted me out of the buggy at the door of our house with a gentle word. The cows were in the barnyard. My father put up his horse and began the milking. My mother and I went to bed. I dimly remember being awakened for a moment by the talk and laughter of my brothers and sisters and Uncle Miner, now home from the fair, as they sat at the table eating their supper of bread and milk.

CHAPTER II \

THE CHARACTERS AND DIVERSIONS OF PARADISE VALLEY

WHEN the work of the summer and the early autumn was finished, we had a short term of "Select School" for which a teacher of high quality was engaged. I had a curious notion of the meaning of the words, for an older brother had told me that the pupils were "selected" by tapping them on the forehead with an iron rod to see which could stand it the best. I spent the first day in fear of what might happen to my forehead.

I remember well the apple gathering, with mittens, for the chilly winds of autumn were abroad as we went to the orchard on the east brow of the hill. How the falling fruit pelted my head and back as my brothers climbed and began to shake the loaded boughs above me.

Near by was the great lone tamarack that towered in the sky straight as a ship's mast. It had seen the coming of the white man and his ax. It stood at the top of this first terrace in the foothills—a stately relic of the ancient forest looking down upon the sown lands and singing as the wind

COMING UP THE ROAD

blew of the shady solitudes it had known. I loved to go and feel its shaft and look up at its feathery branches. They were like swaying censers that made a garden in the air, flinging down a fragrance sweeter than that of flowers.

Some autumn evening there would be a husking-bee, with lanterns, on the barn floor. Boys and girls from far and near came for an hour or so of husking. The lucky finder of a colored ear of corn was kissed by every member of the opposite sex present. There were sure to be certain kisses worth a thousand times more than the work and journey. They came to the house, in good season, for doughnuts and cake and preserves and cider and to indulge in kissing games—hunt the squirrel, puss in the corner and blind man's bluff.

The kissing interested me. I rather longed to expose myself but was timid until a pretty young miss pulled me in. When I got kissed every one laughed at me and I covered my face for shame, but, after all, this first disgrace was delightful and I began to have secret thoughts of a certain saucy, bright-eyed girl of my own age.

When the cold November winds were blowing we went down into the great cow pasture in winter coats and mufflers and climbed the big butternut trees and shook down their fruit, sacking it and spreading it on the attic floor to dry.

Winter evenings we cracked and ate these nuts by the fireside. One evening during the winter the neighbors, young and old, came for an apple-paring. A paring machine was clamped to the kitchen table. Some young man kept it going while the ladies quartered and cored the apples and strung them on long strings. These were hung on hooks attached to the kitchen ceiling to dry.

The work done, there would be games and dancing and a bite of luncheon and farewells at eleven.

What a time of mystery was Christmas morning! We children hung our stockings on the chairs with pins. There were no fireplace and mantel in our new house. That kind of thing was too old-fashioned for us. My parents had had enough of it in New England. Stoves were cleaner, more effective and economical.

We arose at dawn and stole down-stairs to find our stockings overflowing with colored picture-books and sticks of candy and raisins and English walnuts and shiny tin trumpets. Then what an outcry in the cold dim shadows! My father and mother would rise in bed and look at us and laugh. Shivering from the cold and our excitement we would rush back to our bedsides and dress with all possible haste. We had made a plan the night before. We were going out to look for the tracks of the reindeer.

COMING UP THE ROAD

Our clothes and boots on, we clattered downstairs. The fire was crackling. My mother and father were dressing at the stove-side.

"Put on your mufflers and mittens," my mother commanded.

In a great hurry we obeyed and ran out-of-doors and around the house and up the road on the crisp frozen snow, looking in vain for the tracks of the reindeer. We came back disappointed.

My father said that reindeer stepped pretty lightly, anyway, and that so much snow blowing around would cover any track in an hour. It was not convincing, but how could one doubt the word of one's father or mother?

We began to survey our treasures, looking over the pictures in those wonderful, colored books and blowing the tin trumpets. The raisins, nuts and candy, by parental decree, could not be eaten until after breakfast.

We were going down to Uncle Darwin's to eat our Christmas dinner. That was seven miles east of us on the Potsdam road. So after chores and breakfast, we younger ones were carefully washed and dressed. Soon the three-seated sleigh came up to the door, drawn by the handsome pair of dapple-grays, each with a string of bells around his body and rosettes on his bridle. We got in, three on a seat, in overcoats, ear-laps and mufflers.

Wrapped in blankets and buffalo robes, we set out on our journey. The air was frosty. The two ruts in which the horses and the sleigh traveled were packed hard and smooth. It was good going and the horses went fast, their bells ringing merrily. In about an hour we had driven up to the door of the red brick house where Uncle Darwin and Aunt Eliza lived. My uncle and his three boys came out of the door to give us merry greetings.

All got out of the sleigh and entered the house save the older boys who went to put up the horses.

My Uncle Darwin was a stern, schoolmaster type of man, spare of build, with a close-cropped, iron-gray beard and keen gray eyes.

When my mittens, overcoat, cap and muffler were removed, he said: "Hello, young man! How many are six times twelve?"

Always he called me "young man" and seemed to have great curiosity as to my intellectual standing. He was a kindly man of whom I entertained a high opinion. My uncles and aunts, large, blue-eyed men and women—the former bearded—sat around the stove aiming jests at me and my younger brother. What was there in my look and answer that made them laugh so heartily to my great embarrassment? I presume that my pride in that first pair of pantaloons was a factor in the outbreak. When the boys had come from the barn

COMING UP THE ROAD

and all had got thoroughly warmed the whole company of uncles and aunts and cousins went into the parlor.

Oh, Christmas tree in the corner whose radiance has been shining through the many years since then! And what a radiance! Never have I beheld the like of it. Indeed my eyes were different then. Its top reached to the ceiling, its green branches were laden with shiny and beautiful things. I saw a gold watch and chain, a silver watch and chain, a pair of skates, a red sled, a new pair of boots, a gold ring hanging by a silken thread, and many packages. I stood dumb with wonder and amazement. It is curious that I should most have desired the gold ring.

Santa Claus entered in a great buffalo coat and a long, gray beard, with a short clay pipe in his mouth, and began to pick the fruit of that tree of Heaven and to call out the names of the blest. I observed that he spoke with the voice of my Uncle Hiram. The gold watch and chain were for my sister, the silver watch and chain for my cousin Truman. Those treasures were the great sensation of the day. They were the high points in the family history. If all the talk about them were put in print, it would fill a book as big as the Bible. I did not know that women, as they sat by the fireside with their sewing and knitting, would be speaking

of the lavish generosity of that day for a quarter of a century, some with pride, some with approval, some with ill-natured criticism.

The sled was for me, the skates for my next older brother.

His work finished, Santa Claus touched my head and hurried out of the room. I tried to follow him but was detained. I sought information as to where he had gone.

Then Burton whispered to me: "It's Uncle Hiram."

Uncle Hiram! Was Uncle Hiram Santa Claus? I was mystified and thought much of the matter.

We boys played out-of-doors in the snow, I with my new sled,—a thing very dear to me,—until my Aunt Eliza came out and called:

"Boys, come in to dinner."

We hurried into the house.

First, oyster soup. Then a great roast turkey, creamed mashed potatoes, a big chicken pie and cakes and jellies were spread upon the table.

One incident of the dinner was burned into my memory. A roll of cake cut in sections with rich, red jelly between its spiral layers had been passed to me. I took one piece and, swiftly before the dish had moved, I seized another. The whole company burst into laughter. I knew that I had been guilty of a serious breach of decorum and at the

table of my sacred Aunt Eliza. I covered my face and wept with remorse and embarrassment. My aunt came and kissed me and restored my spirit with kind words.

The men smoked their clay pipes and chatted a while after dinner. We children, a bit overfed, went out-of-doors and tried to resume our play, but our former enthusiasm did not return to us.

Soon after three o'clock the prancing horses were brought to the door. Again we "bundled up" and were carefully tucked in between the robes. "Good-by! Come again!" Away we went, behind the chiming bells, our horses eager to reach the home stable.

I was soon asleep. A golden day had become a part of my little history.

CHAPTER III

THE SUGARING AND SUMMER PLAY

MY COMRADE and brother, Burton, was wont to tell me, now and then, in sacred confidence, of a great fear in his heart. It was this: our mother might die and leave us. What a black, burning thought!

She was not strong, he said, and we must do everything possible to save her.

The notion of death was new to me. True I had seen our neighbor, Mrs. Van Brocklin, when she was dead and had heard the mourning—a thing I remembered, for never before had I seen a man crying. But it had been only a thing to wonder at.

Now the first, big, threatening cloud had drifted into my sky. It was a secret. I could not speak of it. My mother had distressing headaches, lasting for days, which prostrated and almost blinded her. How deeply they grieved and worried me I should find it difficult to tell. I remember a day, when she was ill, they found me sobbing alone in a vacant room. I was asked to explain my emotion, and I lied about it. I said that I was sick. I got my punishment by being put to bed.

Now and then a prospective buyer came to look over the farm. Then suddenly my dream of the trip to Iowa or Kansas on the cars had rainbow colors in it. Descriptive circulars, especially one which told of the inviting town of Cedar Rapids, had fanned my dying hopes. I dogged the footsteps of my father and the stranger over the broad acres of the best farm in Pierpont and listened to every word. Nothing came of it.

I think that the most joyful time between summers was the coming of spring. The mild south wind had in its wings the fragrance of the great snow-filled forest. The snow was melting. The sugar season had come. The great iron kettle was scrubbed with soap and hot water and fastened with an iron chain to its lug-pole, and lifted a little above the ground. It was filled from the well and a fire built beneath it. The cedar spouts and buckets were brought down from the loft above the shed and scalded in the hot water and drained and dried.

Next morning, I went with the older boys on the sleds, loaded with spouts and buckets. Down through the melting snows we chose our way to the sugar bush. I helped to carry the buckets, wading in the deep wet snow. Each man had his kit of tools—ax, augur, bit, mallet, hammer and nails. At a point breast-high on the tree, he hewed away

the rough surface of the bark. That done, he bored a hole in the tree-trunk an inch or more deep, slanting downward. With his mallet he drove the cedar spout into the hole. A nail was driven beneath the spout. The bucket was hung on the nail and the sap began dripping. It sounded on the cedar bottom like the steady beating of a drum. If I were near, I loved to reach up and catch the sweet sap in the hollow of my hand and taste it. Many were busy with this task until hundreds of buckets were catching the drip of the thawed maples.

Meanwhile, the sugar shanty was repaired. Next day the woods rang with our voices as we gathered the sap with milk cans on a jumper drawn by one horse or a yoke of steers laboring through the deep snow. The men went to hillsides and remote dingles with pails and neck-yokes bringing the sap to the jumper. It was hard, slow work when the buckets were overflowing.

The boiling had begun—a season of great excitement. Our cousin, Orwell, had come up from town for the sugaring. He sat much by the fire reading *The Green Mountain Boys* or some like tale. He sang scare-songs and told of wonderful adventures with his playmates in the distant village. I admired his fine raiment and became his willing slave, running on all kinds of errands.

It was a great privilege to be allowed to go with the boys after supper down into the woods to the sugar shanty where a man spent every night boiling the sap. We lay on the buffalo robes under the shanty-roof with the warm flames circling around the kettle before us and making a deep lighted cavern in the darkness. There I heard stories of bears and panthers and the deadly lynx. Uncle Miner would show us how a lynx walked and imitate the cry of a panther. Suddenly I would hear the cry from behind a tree, a little way back in the gloomy wood whither Orwell and one of my older brothers would have gone unobserved. Then my heart would be beating fast although I knew it was play. My fear was half pretense for I loved the illusion.

As the sap boiled up, Uncle Miner would throw off the foam with a long-handled skimmer and keep the big pot from boiling over with a ladle. When the mass had cooled a bit, he would rub the inside of the kettle with a piece of fat pork to prevent burning when the syrup boiled up again.

Uncle Bill Ransome would come through the woods with his lantern from his sugar camp in a neighboring bush where he was also boiling sap with his sons. He was the "poet" of the countryside who had to content himself with a limited vocal publicity, traveling from house to house or to places

where people were wont to gather, and pouring his verse out of a too-willing mouth much given to idle boasting. He was like one of the story-tellers of old. He had some wit and his gift for rhyme and rhythm was remarkable. With this gift and his long white beard and hair, he was the great local curiosity. His boastfulness, his family quarrels and a bitter, sneering spirit had made him unpopular among those modest, reticent, grown people of our countryside. The boys and young men welcomed him for he was a man not like any other they had seen, and often he made them laugh with verses which I think it a pity they should have heard.

He sat down and talked to us of apocryphal and mighty feats of his son George in the forest—how he slew “Old Golden,” the largest buck ever seen, in a hand to horn battle, having wounded him with his rifle. Everybody knew George—a most unheroic figure whatever else one might say of him. Having finished his story, Uncle Bill repeated a rhymed and metrical family history which began with this line:

“The Ransomes are a noble race; from kings and queens they sprang.”

Uncle Miner used to say that they were great springers but they didn’t light well.

COMING UP THE ROAD

When the story-teller had gone away, two of my older brothers would light the lantern and put on their coats and say that it was nine o'clock and that we must be going home. I would walk between them, holding their hands, up the rough, snowy, sled path to our dark and silent house half a mile from the bush. My mother would be awake for a word with me before I went to bed, and I would be eager to tell of my great adventure but she would bid me wait until morning. Orwell and my oldest brother had remained in camp to help with the boiling.

Next day I would be in the woods again with the sap haulers and sitting in the shanty before the fire where I ate my cold luncheon with the others like a man. It was a sorrow to me that I could have but one evening in the bush for I loved the crackle of the fire and the smell of the smoke and the talk of the men.

When some hundreds of buckets of sap had been boiled, the great kettle was cooled down. Then two or three pails of syrup would be dipped from its bottom into a milk can and hauled to the house to be sugared off in the big brass kettle on the stove. It was purged with much skimming and ladled with care to prevent boiling over. We boys were wont to watch this process with deep interest having brought a pan of clean snow and put it

on the table. When the syrup dripped from the dipper in thick brown flakes we brought our saucers, which were filled at the stove-side, and began to spoon our portions on the pan of snow. The hot sugar immediately turned into thick hard wax. The sweetness and the maple flavor of it was one of our great joys. No revel of my childhood was so intemperate. It is a sticky memory, and our pleasure—like most of those we know—had its contrast of pain. We lived much in the open air through the sugar season which helped in its problem of assimilation. But our chief enemy was sugar. The siege of Sweetness continued with buckwheat cakes and syrup every morning. The idle Sundays gave our enemy his chance to undermine our good health and soon one or more of us would go to bed with the great affliction of the northern Yankees—headache.

Some of the sugar was poured into greased tins to cake. Most of it went to the cellar where it fell into the big sugar tub. Before the season ended the latter was filled to its top with some five hundred pounds of this product of the maple forest—a mass so solid that one needed an ax or a chisel to help him fill a bowl.

Somewhere in the neighborhood, before the season ended, there would be a sugar party and dance.

Soon warm rains and sunlight! The snow was

melting and going down into the valleys. The brooks were raging torrents with blocks of ice stranded on their shores. On the uplands were great patches of bare sod. The frost was coming out of the earth. Every dip in its surface was a pond or a puddle of icy water. The roads were a wallow of mud freezing at night and thawing in the sunlight. For a time men traveled only with wide-tired wheels on heavy wagons. Some years far into May a patch of snow could be seen on a shaded corner of the ledge. Uncle Miner used to threaten to tackle it with a pail of hot water.

The grass turned green in the fields. The brooks, their great task finished, recovered from their excitement and resumed their steady pace. May had come. The roads were drying out. The nights were filled with the song of the peepers. I loved to hear them after I had gone to bed in the evening with the windows open. Men and horses were at work in the fields, plowing, harrowing, seeding and planting.

I begged for the beloved privilege of taking off my shoes and stockings. I was allowed to do it for a part of the day. The ground was cold. I suffered much with acute pains in my legs in the evening. My father was wont to rub them with hot pepper sauce after I had gone to bed in the evening which gave me some relief.

Summer school began. We carried our lunches of bread and butter and doughnuts and cheese and apple pie in a covered tin pail. There was a perpetual flavor of apple pie and drying wood in the schoolhouse. In bare feet I suffered much from the damp chilly air of its one room in the early summer. The winter had no such trial for the human system as that. Sore throats and legache were a common affliction of the young. If the teacher had had the good sense, energy and humanity to build a fire in the stove she might have changed it from a hell into something better. Its desks were hacked and carved by jack-knives. Here and there were obscene suggestions. A part of its environment one may fitly describe only with profane epithets and a look of disgust. It was not an inspiring place for the young, I would say. Yet through it all the best boys and girls kept their hearts and minds clean.

Saturdays my next older brother and I would have our stint to do. Generally it would be cording in the woodshed. We worked with great energy. If I got discouraged, my brother would urge me on.

"If we keep at it you'll be surprised to see how soon we get through," he would say.

So we kept at it, and when the task was finished we got our hooks and lines. We hurried to the

garden and dug a can of worms. On the run we went down to the brookside where my brother cut two alder poles. We rigged them with the lines, attached the hooks and sinkers and with a good bait of worms, which was always spat upon for luck, began fishing on opposite sides of the brook.

Peppermint and blue iris would, here and there, add fragrance and color to the brook valley. Red-winged blackbirds would be calling in the feathery elmtops and the marshy sedges.

We jerked with tremendous energy when a trout took the bait, often throwing him high in the air and hearing him land far behind us and having to hunt for him in the grass. Our sport was therefore a combination of hunting and fishing. I can think of nothing in my youth that so well expressed its enthusiasm as that quick rejoinder with which we answered the sallies of the trout. How our rods and lines sang in their upward sweep! I am sure that the unlucky trout must have wondered at the unexpected swiftness and power in that little angleworm. Well, even among men there are surprises of a like nature and result.

Up through meadows and pasturelands we followed the stream until we came to the Fork. There in its deep hole we could often see a "flock" of trout, some of a pound weight. These were "old he ones" in our talk. Always we dignified a good-

sized trout with the masculine gender. I recall that our angleworms did not look good to them. They would seem to say "No, thank you" when we touched their noses with our loaded hooks.

My brother had foreseen this kind of mutiny. He drew a piece of wire from his pocket and looping it into a snare, fastened it to his line. He let it down in the water and carefully moved it toward the "flock." What a quiver in my body as I watched this process! I think that an earthquake could not have turned my gaze. In a moment the circle of wire would be around the middle of the biggest fish. Then a jerk and out he would come, with a splash, and fall flopping on the bank behind us, the snare tight around him. That would end our fishing in the deep hole for the frightened "flock" would have vanished.

We would wend our way up the Darling Brook that came singing down through rocky wooded ravines into a broad meadow flat before it reached the main stream of Paradise Valley. It was a narrow rivulet—we could easily jump across it. Through all its journey from the highlands it splashed over many a little fall in its bed into a shaded foamy pool. The tree branches would be close above us so that we were not able to indulge in the unrestrained, full-swing jerk of the open banks. Still, in such haunts we were sure to take a

COMING UP THE ROAD

number of trout from a finger's length to a quarter of a pound in size. Onward through woody vales and briared open spaces we fared, passing through a scattered herd of cattle. We lay face downward by the mint-flavored edge of the stream now and then to drink of its cold water. We came at last to the open uplands of Aunt Hester Darling's pasture where were the many springs that fed the brook. That ended our fishing. The sun was well down in the west.

We were tired and hungry. Until now no trivial thought of food and weariness had entered our minds. We looked at our fish on the forked stringer of alder withes. They had shriveled in the sunlight. Burton dipped them in the cold water. He counted our catch.

"Fifteen!" he said. "Time to go home. I wish we had the big one that I threw out in the meadow."

We crossed to the road and started down toward the valley. Silently we walked along toward the stern realities of life. It was a little like going home from the fair. We hurried when we saw the house.

"I wonder what mother will say to them," said Burton, as he proudly held up the string of fish.

How still was the house! The men had not yet come in from the fields. We found our mother. She was weary like ourselves. We displayed our

SUGARING AND SUMMER PLAY

catch and were disappointed at her lack of enthusiasm. I eagerly began to tell of our adventure.

"I think that you did very well," she said. "Go and wash your hands and get some bread and butter and sugar. Then it will be time to begin your chores."

There were the pigs and calves to be fed, the wood-box and water pail to be filled, the cows to be brought up from the pasture.

Our reward fell upon us when the men came in to supper and saw the great platter of trout, fried in pork fat, on the table. With pleased exclamations which were music to our ears, they inquired where we got them. Then for a brief time we had the floor. Burton told of the great fish which he had flung far back in the meadow where we could not find him. "He never flopped a bit after he came down," Burton explained.

"He'd been travelin' fast an' I wouldn't wonder if he was a little out o' breath," Uncle Miner suggested. "I guess it would take the flops out of a boy to be grabbed an' thrown a hundred feet in the air."

The swimming-hole was a place where the brook ran deep about a quarter of a mile from our house down the cow-paths in the pasture. To us boys it was a great source of joy. It had a bottom of soft clay and was not more than four feet deep. Our

grandfather used often to go down with us. I remember that I was deeply interested in the moles on his back and used to creep up behind him to feel the biggest one with my finger. I decided that it could not be compared as an object of interest with the one on my Great-Aunt Minerva's face which had a white hair growing out of it. I kept on the edges of the pool ready to run for fear that the big boys would duck me.

My grandfather was a man of an old-time flavor which engaged my interest. His *a's* were even broader than my mother's. He spent a part of each day reading in his room. My younger brother and I were wont to slip into it and annoy him with childish pranks and take refuge under his bed. Then we had an exciting moment dodging the ivory-headed cane with which he felt for us and saying: "Come out, you rahscals!" Our escape, when his back was turned, was apt to be thrilling.

He was a Free Mason (I knew not what it meant) and a framed legend with mysterious symbols on it hung in his room.

One day of that summer may not be left out of this little history. It was a warm bright day.

When I was about seven years old, guns began to interest me. I was wont to carry with me a cross gun neatly hewn out of a pine board and fitted

with a hemlock bow by my father. The arrow sped along its creased top into the air.

I knew where a real gun stood a little beyond the head of the stairs in the horse barn. I knew I ought not to touch it. But this I had done, one day, when I had stolen into the barn alone. I took the gun in my hands and I think that I lifted its hammer. I was a bit frightened then and carefully put it back where I had found it.

Soon came that warm bright day of midsummer. My oldest brother, Loren, saw a crane feeding by the edge of the brook. He ran to the barn for his shot-gun. Near the top of the stairs he reached forward seizing it below the muzzle and dragging it toward him. It exploded, the charge tearing its way through the muscles, arteries and bone of his upper left arm near the shoulder. He came running and calling toward the house, losing blood so rapidly that every second put his life in danger. My mother and I who were in the house heard the report of the gun and the outcry. We ran to the porch where my panic-stricken brother fell at our feet. It was a critical moment. Quick and heroic work had to be done by the strong-hearted woman. There could be no hesitation. She had a dish towel on her arm. Bending over the boy she quickly made a short rope of the towel and corded his arm with it. Meanwhile, the spurting of his blood

had drenched her. By swift and decisive action, the breach had been stopped and the battle won. She sat there holding the bandage in place and giving her son what comfort she could while one of the boys who had come up from the field mounted a horse and ran him to the doctor's house three miles away. It must have been a long wait for her.

I saw my mother and the skilful doctor cleansing the wound and binding up the severed arteries and cutting away and joining the torn flesh and muscles. At last the wound was dressed, the cord gradually loosened.

"If you had fainted or lost your head for a moment, this boy would be dead now," said the doctor, a slim and sober-faced man who rode to the far ends of the countryside, night and day in all weather, faithfully tending his flock. "It is a bad wound rather close to the heart."

He said no more to her, but he said to many others that my mother was a woman of ten thousand.

A frail, tender-hearted, gentle-voiced woman, she was as far as possible from the strong-minded, stern-handed, masculine type. The time has come when I should like to write of her, but I think it better first to show her spirit as she crosses, now and then, the foreground of my narrative.

CHAPTER IV

MY IMAGINATION BEGINS ITS SAD CAREER

EVENINGS in the autumn and winter my mother used to read to us aloud from the *Weekly Tribune* as she sat by the lamp. We heard poems by Longfellow and Tennyson, and Alice and Phœbe Cary, vivid reports of the growing West, sketches of travel, thrilling Indian tales and war adventures. These latter were most to my liking as I lay with my brother on the lounge. The names of Greeley, Grant, Lincoln and Lee became familiar to me, but for a long time they were only names.

The shelves in the upper part of the old mahogany secretary, which had come from Springfield, were filled with our library. Often I would stand on a chair and look at the books. These titles I remember: *The Golden West*, *The Morgan Horse*, *The Horse Farrier*, *Rollins' Ancient History*, *Botta's Souvenirs*, *The Angel of the Household*, *Indian Stories*, *The Minister's Wooing*, *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp*, *Captain Cook's Voyages*.

My mother tried to induce me to read the pious tales of T. S. Arthur. Somehow piety was like

greens and castor-oil which were said to be good for me. I despised them, but in deference to the strong sentiment in their favor I read them secretly. The horses of the Morgan breed interested me and often I amused myself by making pencil drawings of those showy steeds.

"You've been a little unfair to him," said my father, after surveying one of my efforts. "You have misplaced one of his hind legs and put a spavin on the other. You mustn't be careless of a horse's legs."

It was a cheerful atmosphere in which I lived.

One day a sample copy of *The Youth's Companion* arrived with its premium list. I read it to the end of the last line. I was to get three dollars for going early every week-day morning to the schoolhouse and building a fire. This gave me a degree of financial credit in the household. Anticipating the day of plenty to come, my father loaned me the sum needed to pay for a year's subscription in advance to *The Youth's Companion*. Its pictorial premium list for new subscribers had fired my imagination.

One bright, cold, Saturday morning in mid-winter I got leave to sally forth on my first business enterprise. In overcoat and muffler, with my trousers tucked into the tops of my small boots, I climbed the long hill-slope on the hard crusted

banks of snow. The rippled, white waves glowed in the sunlight as if they had been oversown with diamonds. Hunters were out with guns and dogs and I could hear the musical, far-sounding bay of the hounds. The woodlands rang with echoes. It was a familiar cry.

I discussed with myself what I should take for a premium if I got a subscriber. Would it be a dozen lead pencils in a beautiful case, a book about lions or a microscope? I leaned toward the microscope.

My first call was at the house of Wheaton Bullis on the hilltop. As usual, Mrs. Bullis showed a lack of respect for my manhood by embracing me and addressing me as if I were a canary bird. In spite of that, I had a high opinion of her. As soon as possible I came to the business in hand. I showed the sample copies and proudly and seriously announced that I was taking subscriptions for *The Youth's Companion*.

She looked at the papers. She was sorry but she could not afford it. I had better go down to James Bullis's. She thought that he would subscribe. If I would wait a moment, she would give me some honey. I was disappointed, but I held my heart up. I ate the honey and some bread and butter and thanked her and set out across the snowy fields for the stone house of James Bullis

below the far side of the hill. I had seen it often as we had passed it on our way to Canton. I went through a piece of thick woods. I got turned around in the timber. I was lost and faced about to go back. I wandered and soon came into the clearing near a strange house. I did not recognize it. There is an old phrase for that singular daftness which often comes, in thick timber, upon one who is not accustomed to such travel. In a stage of it, a man loses the capacity for recognition. He seems to lose all confidence in the report of his senses. He will fail to recognize even his best friend. If I remember rightly the phrase is "man-wild." I had it. A little frightened, I went to the house and rang its door-bell. It was James Bullis's. Now at last the house and the road were swinging around into their proper place. They had begun to look familiar.

"Are you Paul Bacheller's boy? Come in. I am glad to see you," said the gentle-faced lady who came to the door.

They gave me a subscription, Mr. Bullis writing, at my dignified request, his name and address on the blank form which I had put in his hand. The lady gave me the money—a dollar bill and some shinplasters. I counted it carefully and asked her if she would kindly pin up the pocket in which I stored it so that I could not lose the money. This

she did with a gentle laugh which hurt my dignity a little.

With what a sense of triumph and responsibility I set out by the road for home! My fortune was made. What need had I for further effort? I was eager to tell of my adventures and I hurried. I even ran a part of the way. The microscope would be mine. My letter was written with great care to Perry Mason & Co. and sent away with a money-order by my father.

Impatiently I awaited the arrival of the microscope. Then came a letter for me—my first letter—with my full name on the envelope. It was a formal letter and receipt, but how I treasured it and how proudly I showed it to every one who entered the house! With it came my first sense of a separate individuality. I began to write letters and to watch eagerly for the coming of the mail.

“Is there a letter for me?” was my query, now, when it was brought.

The microscope arrived. It was in the nature of a calamity to the flys and ants and bees, many of which were dismembered to see how their legs, eyes and wings would look under the magnifier.

For many years this treasure occupied a place on our what-not with the stereoscope and its photographs, the daguerreotypes, the kaleidoscope, the

sea-shells, the family album and the big morocco-bound Bible.

As I think of it now, the microscope was like my young imagination which had a singular power of magnification. Things looked bigger than they really were to me, especially the fish that I failed to bring home. My adventures had a vividness of color and an importance which others had not observed. It is, I think, a dangerous gift, which has done me no small amount of harm. When one is young, his cows may jump over the moon without doing any serious damage to their owner. But as time goes on, they must become more temperate. How many men I have known like old Bill Ransome, whose intractable cows are still sailing through the sky. They never get the poise and restraint of well-regulated cattle.

The Bible, I have to confess, was a bore to me. I had a little green book with paper covers, very sacred because my old grandmother had given it to me on her death-bed. It told the story of Meshach, Shadrach and Abednego, with a picture of the fiery furnace. I did not fail to observe the note of incredulity in my mother's look and words when she tried to answer my queries regarding the sad adventure of those boys. That settled it. The subject no longer interested me. My mother, who had read the Bible three times from beginning to

end and who had a gift of faith and interpretation at which her friends wondered, seemed to think that it was not a thing for childish minds to meddle with; that each should find his own way to the Light without fear and with the courage of matured strength. The Bible for me suffered from its association with pinched feet and bad air and headache and the prolonged and deadly eloquence of Elders Whitfield and Pangborn.

I was eleven or twelve years old when a copy of *Our Boys and Girls* fell into my hands. Thereafter I read with breathless interest the serial stories of Oliver Optic.

The Christmas of my twelfth year brought a red-covered book with the following titles in black letters on its cover: *Sketches by Boz, The Uncommercial Traveller and Great Expectations*. It was a real, cloth-bound book, its text in execrably small type, two columns to the page. It took me out and far into the world of men and women. I was curiously attracted by the newness of the book and its odor. I suppose that glue, ink and paper each contributed to that grateful and memorable fragrance. I sat down by a window and began the most thrilling experience of my life. I was soon out on the misty marshes on the coast of old England with Pip and Uncle Pumblechook and Joe Gargery. What a Christmas journey was that!

The humor and pathos in the events and the masterly character drawing were not lost upon me. I had entered the gate of that great garden of the ages which the human imagination has created. I was no longer confined to a lonely back-country farm.

Soon my Uncle Charley loaned me *Hard Cash*, *Put Yourself in His Place* and other novels by Charles Reade. I became the happiest lad in the hills, but I was ruined for drudgery.

I hated the dirty work which soiled my hands and garments, like picking up stones or potatoes and pulling weeds. Often I did it, but my hands were exceedingly sensitive. I have never been able to endure the feeling of certain objects without a shudder of revulsion. Velvet is one of them. I also always dreaded the feel of stones and potatoes.

It was on this account, I suspect, that I was appointed to help my mother with the dishes and the washing and the chores when we were short-handed in the house. For many years my oldest sister had been away teaching school. When she returned, her trunk was an object of great interest among us younger boys. She would lock it, but when she went away on a visit we would find the key and open it and read her letters—some of which were from a young man deeply interested in her—and handle her trinkets and finery. I

remember that I appropriated an embroidered ribbon which I planned some time to use for a necktie, having a great fondness for beautiful things.

We discussed the letters with the older boys and they were soon asking her about the young man. We youthful barbarians were the plague of her life. I think that she got a deep distrust of the opposite sex from us for she did not marry until she was past middle life.

I must have been a trial to my parents for generally I was called from some beloved story to my tasks. I would never make a farmer and what would become of me? That query was on many lips. My father said that he guessed I'd have to be a minister. There were some who said that I was lazy. I think that book-bound and happy would be a more accurate description of my trouble. I am glad to have had it. The rest of them are all dead. I write it solemnly and with a due sense of the responsibility of that lonely, rough, pioneer farm.

They all agreed that I was a good scholar. My scholarship, measured by the rustic standards of that community, was probably remarkable at twelve. I was in the highest classes and knew the English grammar and the art of analyzing and parsing better than I know it now. My vocabulary was unusual. Large words caught my fancy.

I loved to play with them. My mother was my dictionary. I never sought from her the definition of a word that she was not able to give without hesitation, even when I was in college. My compositions caused me great embarrassment on account of the laughter they produced at school and in my home.

Was it ridicule? Doubtless it was due to a budding sense of humor and character and diction and to my use of words which rarely came from the mouths of boys as young as I.

It was in the summer of my thirteenth year that we got news of the serious illness of my married sister in Auburn. My mother left us to go to her. A letter came which informed us that the girl was rapidly failing. My father told us what it meant. A deep sorrow fell upon our home—the first of many. Now the time was come when I began to feel my dependence on a Higher Power and to appeal to it for a merciful consideration of my wishes. I do not remember just how this came about. I think that it was something in my mother's letters—a deep pervasive something out of her spirit which had entered my own.

In August my mother returned with the pathetic remnant of the joyous girl who had left us a year before to go to her new home.

The baby came to live with us—a little girl.

MY IMAGINATION

I despised babies, but soon she won my heart. I began to feel the sweetness, beauty and power that are in the heart of a child when, in a year or so, they took her back to the home of her father where she faded away and was presently brought to rest at her mother's side. Again I was in the shadow of a mystery beyond my understanding. It quickly passed. As when a black cloud drifts slowly in the wind, its shadow moving until the sunlight falls where it rested, so go the sorrows of youth. They are like the shadows of a June day.

CHAPTER V

WE GO A-SUCKERING

A YEAR passed. I was thirteen. That winter Merrill Crandall at the school lyceum, one evening, had amused the people with a paper entitled *Prophecies*. In it he saw me in the exalted position of "bookkeeper for a prosperous Chicago firm at a salary of fifteen hundred dollars a year." I remember the exact words and his way of saying them. It was conceded that I was a promising lad, but such visionary power and grandeur raised a laugh. I did not know what was a bookkeeper, and the vastness of fifteen hundred dollars was like that of the town I lived in, unexplored, and beyond my comprehension.

Those days I used to hear my elders speaking in awed tones of a man near Canton who was worth ten thousand dollars. I wanted to see how he looked. I knew what I would do with it. Every year I would go three days to the fair and buy a barrel of lemonade and a bushel of oranges and peaches and some neckties that I had seen in a store. I had a great longing for fine raiment. Money and I were strangers.

One little episode had its part, I think, in sowing the seed of a persistent prejudice against mathematics. All learning had been easy for me. I was probably a bit conceited. My oldest sister was teaching the school. I am sure that a more patient, kindly and conscientious teacher never lived. She was explaining some point in a difficult problem. I suppose that my mind was wandering. I did not get the point. I was a sensitive lad and something that she said then irritated and hurt me. She pressed me for an answer. I could not have answered without bursting into tears before the whole school. I was too proud for that disgrace. I looked down and did not answer. Doubtless the example of my seeming stubbornness had a bad effect on the other students. A little tact and some knowledge of the psychology of boyhood would have saved the situation.

My sister hurried home for dinner as soon as school was dismissed. I followed, knowing that trouble was in store for me. I was slow in reaching the house. There was an ominous serenity in the family circle. My older brothers looked across the table at me with knowing smiles. My father was unusually kind to me. My mother was silent. Her face had a troubled look. I knew that I was condemned. I was one apart.

After dinner we played croquet for a little time.

I think that my father dreaded what was before him more than I did and that was quite enough. No doubt the game was entered upon to give his anger a chance to cool. I cheered up as we played and did what I could to favor his ball.

The game ended. The decisive moment had come. My father turned to me and gently asked me to go with him. We went again through the orchard where he cut a number of sprouts. We climbed over into the lane back of the plum trees. It was a memorable occasion.

Corporal punishment is good only when it can not be avoided. It should not be lightly entered upon. An open apology before the school was the expiation needed.

Now my father was a kindly, generous, affectionate man, but feeling that the discipline of his daughter's school had been imperiled by his own son, he was indignant. The whips struck harder than he knew and a bit unfairly, I have always thought. I meant no wrong and should have had a hearing.

I knew a man who could never eat oysters because he had once eaten a bad one which made him ill. Often I have wondered if my prejudice against mathematics had its origin in the bitterness of that experience. Suddenly I began to hate it and at a time when the proper grounding for

the higher mathematics should have been made.

My older brothers had begun to speak pieces at the school lyceum. Carefully trained by my mother, whose English had the Bostonese flavor, their skill in declamation was the talk of the countryside from the plains to Pierpont Center. One day in school I tried to declaim. In doing it I made a fatal mistake. To quote my friend Hamlin Garland, "I set my mouth going and then went off and left it."

Now a mouth when it is busy is in need of a boss. It has to be looked after. It is a thing that can never be trusted without watching. I was thinking of the girls and boys who were looking at me and not of the words I was trying to speak. I forgot my lines and broke down and made a wretched failure of my effort.

The spring's work was done. Summer had come again. We boys were going into the great woods to have some fun. My older brother Arthur was in ill health. He had overdone in a race across country. He had a persistent cough. It was thought that the trip into the wilderness would be good for him. Joe Bolieau, a guide of French-Indian blood, was to go with us. The big lumber wagon was stored with hay and sacks of oats and baskets of buttered bread, hard-boiled eggs, salt pork, dried beef, pies, cheese and doughnuts, a number of quilts and blankets, an ax, a shot-gun,

a frying-pan, a few dishes, a tub and a sack of salt.

We set out one cloudy, June morning for Cranberry Lake. It was a new experience, and we were all very happy.

The garrulous and profane Joe began telling stories of desperate fights with game wardens. In his conversation he had astonishing success in knocking them down and running away from them. Every few minutes he would be knocking down a game warden. Those days in the wilderness there was little respect for law among the hunters. Joe was one of the famous deer slaughterers. A genial laugh of self-congratulation came from his lips at the end of each story.

I imagine that our parents consented to this adventure of ours with much reluctance, but the sons of pioneers had to learn how to get along with guns and profanity and foul talk and the accidents of a long, rough journey. We were to travel forty miles up over the steep, rocky hills and through muddy valleys and mostly under the cover of the forest.

We were going a-suckering on Sucker Brook. It was no noble type of sportsmanship. It was on the level of art that Joe enjoyed. The suckerer, I learned, caught his prey in his hands from under the stones of the brook. These hard-meated fish

from the icy mountain water were dressed and salted down in a tub. Joe explained that a tub of suckers would last all summer and be as fresh and exhilarating as when they first came out of the brook. Burt and I kept an open mind but were not quite convinced as to the fun of it. Arthur had a more practical turn and was thinking of the commercial side of the plan.

Up over the sand plains and beyond the Star Schoolhouse—about the last outpost of civilization—we fared into a land at the very edge of the wilderness. Here and there along the road were rude shacks and cabins where a few shiftless, hairy men and women dwelt in loneliness and poverty, on rocky, stumpy acres, hoping against all possibility that the land was soon to be filled with settlers. We waved our hands and called to these lonely, dejected people as we passed them. Only the kindness of nature kept them alive. They were largely fed by the deer in the woods, the fish in the streams, the berries in the fields and the nuts in the forest. Herbs were their medicine.

We passed the abandoned Iron Furnace at Clifton, a place of towering hills, covered with the primeval forest, and of great natural beauty. Here the River de Grasse came out of the deep woods tumbling over a rock precipice some twenty feet high with noisy haste into a great pool—about two

acres in size—its dark surface covered with flecks of foam. Below it, along the river shore were the bed and decaying trestles of the old railroad, its wooden rails covered with straps of rusted iron. Long before, it was thought that Clifton would be the Pittsburgh of the Adirondacks, and many came there to work in the furnace and the mines. They built houses now deserted and half ruined by the weather. A few still clung to their homes. Among them was Gordon—a Scotch tailor—smooth-faced, polite, kindly and beyond middle age. He had built a log inn on high ground above the edge of the pool—a convenient and most comfortable stopping place for people going in or coming out of the woods.

There we entered the great forest a hundred and fifty miles deep. It was an up-hill journey. Old Harry Warner passed us going out rattling down the steep slants in a two-seated wagon behind a pair of trotters. He was a notoriously fast driver who for more than forty years had kept a tavern in Canton. He had gone in with some fishermen.

All day we sang and chattered along up the hills, reaching Tuley Pond a little before sundown. The sky had cleared. The pond, with its deep border of flowering lily-pads, shone in the sunlight. Here we stopped and began to make a camp for the night. Joe girdled a number of great spruces from

which he stripped sections of bark about four feet long and the whole circle of the tree in width. He talked as he worked.

"This is a hell-roarin' pond for deer," he said. "As soon as the camp is made, I'll go an' find a boat. There's a boat hid somewhere on every good deer pond in the woods. I know how to find 'em. You bet your guts I do."

His conversation often hit below the belt, so to speak.

He was a fast worker. He cut poles and crotches, and soon we had a lean-to well roofed and sided so that a rain could not wet us. We boys, meanwhile, gathered balsam boughs and covered our earth floor with a thick mat of them. Joe made a small fire before the lean-to and cooked tea for himself and my older brothers. As he worked he told us the tragedy of Tuley Pond—how Hi Derby and Earl Knox had been hunting together on its shore at night, how one of them had mistaken the other for a deer in the gloom and poured a load of buckshot into him, how the living boy had toiled down the road in the darkness with the dead one on his back. It was a gruesome tale which has made me cautious when I had a gun in my hands.

We sat, side by side, under the roof and ate our supper as the light of day faded into darkness. There were bears, lynx, panthers and wolves in the

wilderness those days, and Burt and I were thinking of them.

As the dusk grew, Joe began to whisper. "You all keep quiet here while I go off an' find a boat," he said. "Don't be scairt. There ain't no wild animal that'll hurt ye. If there's anything that a four-legged critter in the woods hates worse'n p'ison it's the look of a human bein'. They know how fur a man can spit."

He left us and soon returned laughing under his breath and whispering: "I've found a boat an' a good paddle. Lord Go'almighty! It was within twenty rod o' the landin'."

He began to fix his jack—a dark lantern worn on the head so that one could flash its light at will. Arthur was going out to hunt with him in the boat. The jack, fastened to a kind of a hat crown, was adjusted to my brother's head. They loaded the gun and stealthily proceeded to the shore of the pond in the darkness.

Weary after the long day of travel, Burt and I spread a blanket on our mat of boughs, far back in the lean-to, and lay down pulling two blankets over us, for the night was chilly. He talked bravely, but we were both afraid. What a grateful odor of fresh-cut spruce and balsam filled the air! We were soon fast asleep.

Some time later the roaring of the gun awoke

me but only for a moment. Soon I was again awakened by a crackling fire and by the voices of Joe and Arthur who stood bending over it talking in low tones as they tried to warm themselves. They were shivering and speaking of the mist on the pond. I saw them only in a momentary break in the clouds of sleep. The wind blowing toward the land of nod quickly closed it and shut off my hearing and vision.

When I awoke again, the sun was shining down through the treetops. A dressed deer was hanging beside the lean-to. The teapot simmered over a blazing fire. Joe was frying salt pork in the spider as he smoked his pipe and chatted and laughed. Strips of venison steak lay on a plate beside him. His laughing chatter was well salted with profanity. He greeted me with great good cheer.

“Go down to the landin’ there and wash the dream-webs off ye,” he said. “When ye come back here, I’ll give ye southin’ to dream about the rest o’ yer life.”

I had spent my first night away from home, and this was my first morning without a cheerful greeting from my father and mother. I was not quite happy. We ate our breakfast. The meat was tough as fresh-killed meat is sure to be. A steady stream of laughing talk came from Joe.

COMING UP THE ROAD

"I knew when I heard him go ashore after he had fell in the water that he wouldn't go fur," he said, and then he told of many like adventures on the lakes and ponds of the forest at night.

The breakfast over, the deer was cut up, and his meat, wrapped in the hide, was stored in a pack basket. Our possessions were repacked in the wagon, the horses harnessed and hitched to it. On we went up a steep rocky hill toward Cranberry Lake.

We passed the great windfall, the path of the cyclone of 'thirty-seven. Its reeling vortex crashed through the wilderness—a mighty flail with its irresistible vacuum. The great trees broke and tumbled like ninepins where it struck so that a mouse, as Joe explained, could not have lived on the ground beneath them. It jumped the valleys and put a deep notch in the forest sky-lines of the high country. What a thunderous, Jovian feat it must have been! For a long time parts of its wake of desolation stank with the odor of dead animals. It was now filled with a sturdy second growth.

We reached the lake before noon. It was raining and the wind was chilly. We left our horses and wagon in the stable of the log inn. The latter stood in a clearing on the lake shore. There was a man who ran a little steamboat up and down the lake to carry hunters and fishermen and those

who were cutting timber. It was small and home-made by an ingenious woodsman of the name of Robinson, but nevertheless it was a steamboat and the first one I had seen. Our things were stored in it and we steamed away up the lake toward some remote destination. The engine, the vast expanse of the lake,—to me like an ocean,—the mountains beyond its far shore interested me. I began to feel worldly-wise and manly.

We went ashore near the mouth of Sucker Brook. On a bluff overlooking the lake and covered with small poplars we built another lean-to and began our suckering. The brook sang along its way out of the woods between a thick scatter of stones. We lay face downward on the stones and groped beneath them with our bare hands for the suckers. They were too plentiful. One position would often yield a dozen fish or more, from six to ten inches long. A man got at least a hundred of them in a day. The yield of hard work and misery per fish was very large.

What have I not suffered because of my hereditary longing for fish? I have been mired and soaked and half drowned. I have carried boats and heavy packs over mountains with blistered feet beneath me; I have toiled all day and fought mosquitoes all night; I have suffered black flies until the back of my neck was covered with clotted

blood. Those mitigations kept me aware, in the midst of my joy that I was still on earth and human. But suckering introduced me to a type of compound bitterness unique and memorable. When you lie face downward on rough stones that are making dents in your person and holes in your trousers, with wet feet and legs, grabbing in icy water for suckers, you begin to see that you have been misled into the downward way. One by one we backed out of it.

The weather was as cold and wet as the suckers. I longed for home. Lying between the blankets at night I heard the distant howling of wolves. I never heard them again. Ten years later they had ceased to traverse the Adirondack wilderness in packs. A high wind filled our camp with smoke and set our blankets afire.

I was glad to leave that bleak, stormy camping-place and set out for home. Suckering was for ever behind us, but there was a tub of salted suckers in the wagon. The look of it sickened me. Whatever became of them I do not know. I think that they were given to Joe.

The sky cleared as we rode down the hills. I remember that late in the day, above the rattle of the wagon, I heard the singing of many woodland birds. For the first time I felt the beauty of their songs. They were the white-throated sparrow, the

WE GO A-SUCKERING

swamp robin and the hermit thrush. They sang to me as if they would have me carry home a pleasant thought of the woods, and that I did.

I think that none of my brothers ever went back into the deep forest again. I suppose that they had not heard those voices which have been ringing in my memory these many years. But how often the beauty of the woodland scenes and sounds and odors have called me back into the green leafy silences and solitudes.

CHAPTER VI

I LEAVE HOME TO WORK IN A STORE

SOON after our return, an old gentleman drove into our yard one Sunday afternoon. He was Aaron Barrows of the firm of Barrows and Elmer who kept the store at Crary's Mills three miles down the road to Potsdam. He had come to see me. He was round-shouldered and rather bent with age. He wore a gray throat beard. He had a serious face and spoke with dignity. He had heard much of me and wished me to take a ride with him.

I went, wondering as to his purpose. He kept pushing the reins and clucking in the way of a man not accustomed to horses. He drove like a woman. This gave me an unfavorable opinion of him. He wished to know if I would care to learn "the mercantile business," and if my father and mother would like the notion of my going to work in his store. If so, he would give me my board and fifty dollars the first year. He would increase my pay twenty-five dollars a year for three years. I would learn the arts of telegraphy, bookkeeping and retail merchandising. Henry Boyden, who

I WORK IN A STORE

had learned how to do business in his store, now had a fine position in Chicago. We returned, and Mr. Barrows laid his plan before my parents. They thanked him and promised "to think it over," and he left us.

Here was a fork in the road. We paused and much was said for and against the proposed turning. The lonely farm had become dear to me, but the prospect of going to live in Crary's Mills with its two stores, its blacksmith shop, its butter factory, its grist mill, and its huddle of some twenty houses was exciting. Of course it would not be like Canton with its two thousand five hundred people. There was no place like Canton. London was in my geography, but Canton was in my knowledge. It had convinced me. Crary's Mills could not be compared with it. Still there would be a tumultuous kind of life in Crary's Mills. I was eager to share it. So it was decided that I should go and begin this long apprenticeship in the store of Barrows and Elmer.

My mother and I had many a talk about it. I do not recall that she had ever spoken to me before directly of that thing we call honor. There had been little need of it on the farm. We boys were faithful to our tasks and to one another. If we did wrong, we were punished. We lived among sober, honest, industrious folk. Rather remote from

COMING UP THE ROAD

us lived a man who often came home from the village drunk, running his horses, and another man even more remote was a notorious liar, while on a far crossroad lived a swaggering fool whose mouth was filled with curses. We knew what our parents thought of such men. I knew only of these rather mild disorders in our countryside. I have since learned that the dance-halls in certain of the outlying villages and hamlets were not wholesome places for the young—that certain wild, dog-like youths were apt to go there with filled bottles, and that girls were now and then misled by them. My mother distrusted these halls and would never allow her daughters to go there.

When I was getting ready to enter upon my new work, she said to me:

“You must be, above all, strictly honest. They will do everything to test your honor. Money will be left in your way just to see what you will do after you find it. Be careful with every cent that comes into your hands. Let them know that you can be trusted. Don’t fail in that even if you have to fail in doing the work. Perhaps you can not do the work but you *can* be honest. Please remember this—a man without honor is of no account.”

How those words sank into me! All these years they have been a living force. They and other words of hers like them have slowly built in me

the uncompromising, masterful thing we call spirit—a thing not easily understood even by its possessor. It was the first of many like talks that I had with my mother. That day she began to be a force in my life. And now the time has come, I think, when my readers should know her better.

She was descended from John Alden and Priscilla Mullins through the daughter Ruth, who married John Bass of Braintree. She was a frail woman, of medium height, with auburn hair, blue eyes and a very white skin. She was a neat housekeeper. I said of her, when I wrote *Eben Holden*, that her discovery of a fly speck on a window-pane would cloud her day if it were not removed. In her house the glass shone, the stoves were polished, the woodwork was notably clean. Her table set for Christmas or for company with linen white as the frosting on the cakes and old China richly striped with gold—an inheritance from a remote ancestor—and a great brown turkey resting on a snowy platter, made a picture fit for any eye to look upon.

They used to say in that countryside, when a woman's character had been reviewed, "Well, she's a good woman to work." It could have been said of every wife in our township, but I think that no one ever said that of my mother. There were so many better things to be said. It would have been

absurd. Those who spoke of her would have sought out their best words. "Lady" would surely have been one of them. Her talk was fit for any company. She was a woman of dignity and of ideas. She was well educated and widely read. Much of the best literature was familiar to her. She was an interesting human being and rather out of place in a pioneer community. Many came to her for advice and counsel.

Often I have wondered at this. She was a kind and affectionate mother, but I can not recall that she ever kissed me in my childhood. She held me on her lap and sang to me and gave me now and then a fond caress when I was in trouble, but I do not remember seeing her kiss any of her children except my sister when she was going away on a long journey. There is a day in my memory when I bravely kissed her. I suppose that I had seen some neighbor's boy kissing his mother and thought that I would like to try it. I was probably ten years old. She looked at me with a gentle smile of surprise. I was a little embarrassed. The other boys were laughing at me. Had I done an unmanly thing? The tokens of her affection were not cheap. How much it meant to us to get a loving look or a gentle caress from her!

She was like the mothers of old New England. Yet it was only a surface likeness. She had deep

reverence but no fear of God. Fear was to her a base motive. She would have said that one's heart is wrong that has fear in it; that evil is the fit companion of fear. She had embraced the cheerful faith of the Universalists. Now and then she would quote with laughter the doleful hymns of Isaac Watts and the menacing, hell-fire periods of Jonathan Edwards. Those days she never played cards, yet she was fond of fun and had a keen appreciation of humor. She was wont to read aloud the sketches of Artemus Ward and Petroleum V. Nasby with joyous laughter. I never heard her speak ill of any one. There was much of that kind of speaking, but hers was the voice of charity.

She loved amusing traits of character. My Greataunt Samantha—a woman of advanced years—came now and then to visit us. A visit from Aunt Samantha was like the recurring floods of spring. The visit started as soon as she had taken off her things and got comfortably seated in a cushioned rocking-chair and begun her knitting. It lasted for days. The salient feature of the visit was her voice—a low gentle monotone. She set it going and it went on and on. Her face meanwhile was like that of the clock. It never changed. My mother would leave the room as she went about her work. But my Aunt Samantha was a kind of sister of the clock. She ticked on as monotonously

as the ancient timepiece on the wall. It didn't seem to matter whether she was heard or not. She was wound up and it was her duty to keep going until she had run down. My father would come in and perhaps stop to listen a moment. Aunt Samantha did not seem to observe him. She had no time to bother with men. He would look at her and then at the clock and leave with a smile on his face.

She began on Alma Beard. She told what Alma's husband had done and failed to do. Also what she had said to Alma and what Alma had said to her. That having been thoroughly accomplished, she would begin on the Lincolns who lived at Jerusalem Corners. She would tell how Mr. Lincoln had been shaving when the bees swarmed. He had run out to hive them with his face covered with lather. The bees liked the look of the white stuff and swarmed on his chin and got mired in the lather and stung him so that his face swelled up till he was a sight and had to send for the doctor.

Here Aunt Samantha paused for a little laugh almost inaudible. Then she took up the Humphries whose youngest daughter was a headstrong girl. She told what this one and that one had said about her, and what she thought of her. Lastly she took up the Dunkelbergs—especially Mr. Dun-

kelberg who had been to Rochester. She told of all the wonderful things that he had seen in Rochester—the churches, the taverns, the houses of the rich men, the dresses that the women wore. Lastly, poor Mr. Dunkelberg had got a fish-bone in his throat at the tavern table, and Betsy Dunkelberg had fished for it with a pair of tweezers and finally got it out.

In the early morning not much of this stream of talk would have been heard by my busy mother who was constantly leaving and reentering the room. The work finished, she would sit down by the dear old lady and now and then ask a question. At the table Aunt Samantha ate in silence. When she had got back to her chair and the dishes were being cleared away, she would resume by telling of the swelling that came on Mr. Dunkelberg's neck and go on to other themes. A while after the candles were lighted and the family was gathered around the reading table, she would ask:

“Did I ever sing to you that song I heard when I went to visit the Olins down to Buck's Bridge?”

We had heard it many times, but my mother encouraged her to sing and she sang *The Old Musician and His Harp*—a pathetic ballad. Her voice was rather broken. In the midst of her singing, sympathetic tears would be coursing down her cheeks. Promptly at eight o'clock she would put

COMING UP THE ROAD

away her knitting and say that she guessed she would go to bed.

All day long Grandma Dumas would have been working the great spinning-wheel in another room and we would have heard the droning of the spindle. What a trio were the clock, Aunt Samantha and the spinning-wheel, and how alike were their tongues!

Mine was a wise mother. She was very sparing of her praise. My brother Burton was an excellent scholar. He had a noble face and voice and stature. He was broad-shouldered, standing six feet tall in his stocking feet. He had a modest, kindly and quaintly humorous manner of speech. In declamation, with his big, vibrating, bass voice, he could suggest the dignity and power of the great orators. My mother was proud of him as well she might have been. Yet no word of hers betrayed it.

"You have done very well," was high praise from her.

In the look of her, when one had done creditably in her sight, was our best reward. Her praise was largely in her eyes and manner. If one of us had made a hit with her, she would be very quiet and thoughtful. Somehow we learned to recognize the enthusiasm that was beneath her smile.

In my reading she was ever leading me into deeper waters. When I could read with under-

standing and enjoyment Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* and Holland's *Bitter-sweet*, she bought for me a cheap reprint of Milton's *Paradise Lost* and offered me a penny a line for as much of it as I would commit to memory. I began the task and in the course of a year or so got command of many pages of the text. It meant little to me those days. As I grew older the music and power in the lines began to impress me. The exercise was a cultivation to my taste. It gave me a command of the Miltonic phrase which has been a help to me.

My father was a most cheerful man. He played the violin, and often sang as he went about his tasks in the early morning. He was a born athlete who often amused us with feats of agility and strength. When he was at middle age, I have seen him hold a broomstick in front of him and leap over it between his two hands backward and forward, his feet never touching the stick.

The son of a farmer in northern Vermont, his father had been killed by a falling tree when he was a young lad. His mother sold her land and journeyed with an ox-team and her family of four sons and three daughters through the mountains and the wilderness on the old Chateaugay Trail to the St. Lawrence Valley whither her sisters had gone. The year of their moving was, I believe, 1831. The boys were the main dependence of the

widow. Their life was a battle with rocks and roots and stones. They could have only a little schooling in the winter, enough to give them what was called, in the careless orthography of that time, the three R's. When my father was a young man of twenty-three, he went to work in Springfield, Massachusetts, where he met my mother.

He had not the poise and easy self-command of the girl he married. He was, to a degree, impulsive. He could not conceal his pride, his fondness, his resentment or his depression.

Those pioneer Yankees who peopled the land with large families, to be fed and clothed and educated by hard toil, naturally put a high estimate on the value of money. It is a failing for which they can not be fairly criticized. It was my father's failing. Yet I think that he had a wider vision than any of his neighbors. To his sons, he was a friend and comrade. There was always some touch of kindness in his punishments, however severe. We thought him a hero. Other boys used to speak ill of their fathers. We wondered at it.

One thing impresses me when I think of my boyhood. It is the tie of mutual affection which bound our family together, so strong that any one of us would, it seems to me, gladly have given his life for the other.

Such is the home and background I left behind

I WORK IN A STORE

me when, my scanty wardrobe packed in a small, hair-covered trunk, adorned with brass-headed tacks, which had come up from Springfield with my grandfather, I went to Crary's Mills to begin my work in the store of Barrows and Elmer.

CHAPTER VII

IN A MUSEUM OF CHARACTER

BARROWS and Elmer lived together in a comfortable frame house a quarter of a mile or so from the store. I lived with them. Mrs. Barrows was a kindly woman of middle age who wore spectacles. Mr. Elmer—a man of about forty-five with a long brown mustache and a slow and precise manner of speech, had married, a year or so before my arrival, a woman much younger than he, of rather grand manners. This family group revolved around a baby in a swinging crib with a netted canopy—luxuries quite new to me. The child was a great joy to those good people now somewhat advanced in years. Their kindness to the timid, homesick lad who had come to live with them I have never forgotten. I had a comfortable room up-stairs with a slanted ceiling under the roof.

I had an early breakfast and went to the store every morning about half past seven and swept its floor and dusted its counters. My days were spent in wrapping and weighing and selling packages of tea, sugar, crackers and like merchandise or in pumping quart measures of kerosene from a tank

in the cellar and pouring them into cans. The demand for kerosene those days was continuous and rather brisk. Once a week I helped Mr. Elmer to scrub the counters. It was a post- and telegraph-office as well as a store. At all hours of the day people were coming for their mail or to post letters.

Along one side of the main floor was a counter, and shelves behind it, for dry-goods. On its end near the window were show-cases for jewelry, cutlery, leather goods and ladies' finery. Mr. Elmer's work was mostly behind this counter. He knew all the women of the countryside and the names of their children and had, it would seem, a solicitous interest in them.

On the other side of the store was a long counter behind which were the groceries—barrels of sugar and tea, cracker and candy boxes. Near the window on that side was Mr. Barrow's desk, with a safe beneath it, before which he sat on a high stool writing letters and keeping the books.

My moments of leisure were spent in studying the Morse code and practising its transmission on the key. In this I made rapid progress. I was soon able to send messages and receive them on the old-fashioned register and tape with which our office had been equipped. Twice a week I cleaned the batteries and filled them anew with vitriol and water.

The telegraphing caught and held my interest. The mysterious power that flung my words to the far sides of the county appealed to my imagination and gave the task a romantic flavor. Most of my work was to me a wearisome kind of drudgery. I did my best with it and that was not doing well for I had no love of it.

I had seen a girl's face which had deeply impressed me. She was older than I, yet not so much older, I said to myself. Moreover, she was engaged to be married. I longed for a mustache and other evidences of maturity. In the noon hour when I was alone in the store I used, now and then, to take a razor from the show-case and irritate my upper lip by shaving it.

There were curious characters who came to the store. One old gentleman of a sad face had a singular vanity. Every time he came he would tell me in confidential tones that he was a ruin and a wreck. He used the two words so as to leave in the listener no reasonable doubt of his condition. He declared that he was like a house whose timbers were rotting and whose roof was falling in. If we happened to be alone in the store together he would open his shirt-front and show me his breast and say in a melancholy whisper that he was "all sunk in."

Another man was constantly asking for his mail

and would not believe us when we told him that he had no mail in the office. He insisted that we should look again while he put on his glasses and stood peering over our shoulders. Always he left the store muttering and angry as if his disappointment was due to our carelessness or our deliberate malice. One day he brought in a wooden box of the capacity of a half-bushel measure and insisted that we should fasten it on the wall and put his mail in it. Every day he came and gazed into its empty pit and went away muttering.

Doctor Goss, who ministered to the comfort of a countryside whose circumference was many miles in diameter, lived at Crary's Mills. He rode far and wide in his buckboard and cutter. He was a man of dignity, a born student with an understanding of many mysteries. He had a deep interest in me, having helped me into the world. Often he came to see me at the store. If I were alone he would sit down and tell what he knew of the mysteries of electricity and the microscope. These, however, were short sessions of friendly intercourse.

Doctor Goss was the busiest man in the place. He had been worn thin by his long journeys, day and night, on rough roads in all weather. He was a frail man practising all kinds of critical surgery and battling with fell distempers for small pay.

When at last he got one himself and after much hopeless suffering sought the relief of death out of consideration for his family as well as himself, I am sure that no man was ever more fit for the welcome and forgiving embrace of his God. All the good people, even the rough swearing men of those hills and valleys who had felt his gentle hand, must have paused in their work to send up a prayer to Heaven for Alfred Goss.

Decay was the key-note of the life I saw in Crary's Mills.

A lawyer, once distinguished for learning, eloquence and success at the county-seat, but now of departed respectability, strode into the store one day with a Jovian air of dignity and superiority. Always he was well dressed even if his linen was a bit soiled. He belonged to an able and distinguished family. His manners were courtly and admirable. He paused at the desk of the senior member of the firm.

"Mr. Barrows, I believe," he said.

Mr. Barrows greeted him respectfully. Every one knew this man. He was like the ruins of Baalbek or Pompeii.

He said: "I am walking through the country, sir, and have stopped to inquire if you would kindly loan me a dollar."

There was no note of cringing inferiority in

the words. There was a noble grace in their sound and in the look of him as he spoke. He got the dollar. It was worth a dollar to see his erect figure and courtly manners and to hear his impressive voice.

Once he called when I was alone in the store. He was rather deep in his cups. He was as erect and dignified as ever. He addressed me on the art of Sir Walter Scott as exemplified in the romantic tale of *Ivanhoe*. What a romance in the life of the man before me, although I knew it not!

A brilliant lawyer, he had served the county with rare skill as its prosecuting attorney. He had been the terror of evil-doers. No man he appeared against could escape the just punishment of his crimes. Certain of his eloquent denunciations had added inerasible distinction to the history of the St. Lawrence County Bar, a member of which had been the eminent Silas Wright. He was known to be fond of drink, and that was regarded as the chief weapon of the devil. I think that the church-people were disposed to lose no opportunity to prove it. How human that they should love to see the high and mighty taken down! In a moment of weakness and probably sore need, he misappropriated not a large but a considerable sum of money. I have never believed that he intended to steal it although I have not read the evidence in

his trial. He was indicted for grand larceny and sent to prison. He had been a king, and I suspect that the smaller men, stung often by his power, were glad to see him out of the way. I wonder that the county he had served so well did not help and forgive this man instead of hurling him to his ruin.

The Yankees have ever been quick to punish and slow to practise forgiveness—the noblest grace in the spirit of Christ without which what hope is there for most of us?

Not far from the store were two brothers who got into a quarrel over an umbrella, and who because of it did not speak to each other for years. Being a Yankee myself I know something of the virtues and the follies of my people.

There was a boy three or four years older than I who was known in the neighborhood as Bony. He was very thin and had protruding front teeth and a remarkable gift for larruping satire. He would come in at the noon hour when I was apt to be alone and sit and discuss the mental, moral and physical disorders of the countryside. Sometimes he laughed at them, sometimes he looked gloomy and depressed as if worried by the thought of the meanness and deviltry of men and women.

Now, after all these years, I can only hope to give my readers a more or less vivid impression of Bony's peculiar gifts.

"There ain't no fun in this part o' the world," he used to say. "There's nothin' here but butter an' cheese factories an' whiskers an' hard work. I wish somebody would start a fun factory."

He told of one man who had a fun-shop of his own—a prosperous but modest plant. About once a month he set the whole town laughing and wondering. His name was Bumpy Brown. He lived on the Potsdam road and had a wooden leg. He was a kind of mystery. I now quote a little of Bony's talk which I happen to remember:

"He had a spurt of white whiskers comin' out of his chin. Seemed as if his whiskers thought they was runnin' a race with all the other whiskers in the neighborhood an' was in a hurry to get away. Gosh! They looked like the first six inches of water that hisses out of a hose-end. Them white hairs o' his stuck out straight an' stiff as if there was quite a pressure on 'em, but they hissed only when the wind blew."

After this bit of word-painting my young friend shook his head and laughed.

"He had only one enemy an' that was Sile Doolittle, but he didn't talk about him to any one but himself. It was a kind of secret. He'd set by the hour an' tell himself 'bout the meanness of Sile Doolittle. When he had ruined Sile he would go under the shed an' lie down an' take a nap an' stump it home in the cool o' the evenin'."

Bony called our local church the "Sob Works," because the minister talked as if he were always on the verge of an emotional precipice. Sometimes he slipped over the edge and came back with loud and tearful cries. After each of these sallies Bony chortled and shook with derisive laughter. His was the spirit of derision. I have suspected since then that Bony had a vivid imagination and an unusual sense of freedom in the use of it.

My amusements were few. Now and then of an afternoon I would go to see a game of baseball between the local nine and that of West Potsdam. There were days when Bony called it "base brawl." Dan Christian would pitch for us and Nelson Parmenter for the opposition. What a look of stern solemnity was in the faces of the players save that of Leslie Boyden, who was always smiling. They pitched a swift ball those days with what was called the underhand throw, the hand of the thrower being below the line of the hip when the ball left it. The awkward giant, Nelson Parmenter, delivered the ball with singular and bewildering gyrations. They resembled his ornate flourishes that hung every fair-time in Floral Hall. The catching was done without gloves. If a ball was lost the game was discontinued until it was found, as each team had but one leathern sphere. The game was played in a well-cropped pasture flat and a large

gallery of enthusiastic boys and girls—the latter in white dresses with parasols in their hands—stood back of the diamond.

One day a man came and covered our shed with flaming posters of "The Great Eastern, Giant Circus and Menagerie" which was coming to Potsdam "with its mammoth steam piano and innumerable elephants, camels, lions, leopards, tigers and other fierce, terrible and untamed denizens of the jungle." The posters filled me with excitement. Bony and Barney O'Neil were going. Bony suggested that I ask the "old man" to let me go too.

I got the permission I sought from the kindly Mr. Barrows, and at daylight on a summer morning we three boys set out afoot for the village of Potsdam, seven miles away, in quest of fun. It was, as Bony had said, a thing rather hard to find in that locality. We hoped to get a ride. Soon many teams were hurrying along the dusty highway, but every buggy and wagon was filled to overflowing with young and old on their way to the circus. They rushed by with merry greetings, often flicking their whips at us. We ran as we neared the village for fear of being late for the procession. Soon we heard the tuneful hysterics of the steam piano.

"It sounds like Edna Dumas the day that she thought she was bit by a snake," said Bony.

COMING UP THE ROAD

Preceded by lady performers in gorgeous robes mounted on white steeds, it had turned into Market Street. It was a big steam-engine with many whistles, each screaming in a different key, hurling out shafts of frightful sound that split the air on a journey miles in length. Belching steam and smoke and satanic roars, the infernal machine proceeded on its way filling the town with aching ears. As a breeder of excitement I have never seen its equal.

We boys ran along beside the herd of elephants looking up at them.

"I'd hate to give one of 'em a chaw of tobacco," said Bony who was running just ahead of me.

I knew why as well as he did, but I asked why because I wished to hear again the thrilling answer.

"Why, you darn fool," said Bony, "he'd swat ye dead with his trunk an' grind ye under his feet the next time he see ye if it wasn't for a thousand years. An elephant has got a memory an' don't you forget it."

Such aids to the imagination of youth were a great help to the "mammoth shows" that visited our country.

We saw the arrival at the circus grounds and the procession filing into the great tents. There were hours of waiting ahead of us so we made our way back to the crowded village marts.

Suddenly we came upon a young man who stood in a buggy selling something to a large and highly amused crowd of men and boys. Now and then he took from his pocket a handful of coins and scattered them over the crowd declaring that money was a burden and an embarrassment to him. He laughed at the rush and scramble for the coins that followed this bit of advertising. His perfect self-possession, his glibness, his jokes, his magnificent generosity, his handsome face delighted me. When he began to sell his wares the dollars came to him as freely as the nickels had left his hand. I thought that he must be one of the greatest men in the world. They said that his name was Homer Macgarry. So it happened that he became one of the heroes of my youth.

We got some crackers and cheese and apples and ate our frugal luncheon in the park. At one o'clock we returned to the circus grounds and visited the sideshows and got our tickets for the big tents. We entered the latter and slowly passed the cages of wild animals with sundry remarks as to their natural equipment.

"How would you like to meet him on a dark night?" "That feller could grab a cow and run off with her." "Talk about toe-nails! That old boy has hooks in his paw that would tear the hide off a steam-engine."

Such were the illuminating remarks with which Bony enlivened our observations. We went to our seats in the big tent and saw the parade, the riding and jumping and innumerable acrobatic feats.

When we had seen the last of it and had come out with the crowd, the sun was low. Bony found a man who had come into town with a load of oats. We could ride with him about half the way home in his farm wagon. We got aboard and were soon on our way singing merrily and talking of the wonders we had seen. Long after dark, foot-sore and dog-tired, we saw the lights of Crary's Mills.

Mrs. Barrows was up to admit me and to ask if I had enjoyed my holiday. My untruthful assurance that I was not hungry had at least the merit of good intentions. I went to bed with aching legs and an unhappy spirit.

There was a rather grand young lady from a neighboring village who came to the store now and then. She came one day when I was alone and wished to look at the jewelry. I took out the trays of showy golden things for ladies' wear and spread them before her. Soon after that Mr. Elmer reported that one of them was missing. I do not now remember what it was. I did not even suspect the young lady until years later it became rather common gossip that she was light-fingered. Often

I have wondered if Mr. Elmer had quite the same degree of confidence in me after that.

The early autumn had come. My father had rented the farm and had moved the family to Canton. The first Sunday after that I walked five miles down the road to that village to see our new home and the beloved ones whom I had left on the farm in Pierpont. They were settled in a comfortable house shaded by great maples, beyond the bridges, on the river shore with a broad garden sloping to the water's edge. I had a day of joy with those dearer to me than they had ever been. That evening my father drove me back to my task. He said that he thought it were best for me to give up my work in Crary's Mills and come home and go to school. My mother worried about me and had the feeling that I was too young to be living away from home. He would talk with Mr. Barrows about it.

What may have been said between him and Mr. Barrows I know not. I suspect that the firm had concluded that I was not likely to make a merchant prince. My mother was right in her conviction that I was too young at thirteen to be away from home beyond the reach of her counsel. I had not forgotten her strict injunctions in the matter of honestly doing my best. Much of the work had been a kind of drudgery thought to be good for boys.

It all depends upon the boy. The work was probably better for me than I was for it. I lived too much in my imagination to be very successful as an apprentice clerk.

I had made one mistake the thought of which has plagued me these many years. I had borrowed eighty-seven cents from the cash—how well I remember the sum!—intending to return it when I got the next payment on my salary soon due. My father came for me. The small balance to my credit was probably paid to him. I did not get it. So I did not discharge my little debt of honor. Nor did I mention the matter, probably because my father was in one of his gloomy, uncommunicative moods as we were driving home.

I did not see Crary's Mills for years after that day. This sleeping dog grew old and large in my memory and was often barking in his dreams. Sometimes I wonder why I should have put up with him. Then I recall what happened and I wonder no more.

CHAPTER VIII

MY ENVIRONMENT AND ADVENTURES IN THE RURAL VILLAGE WHERE I SPENT MY YOUTH

THE front part of our house was overhung and deeply shaded in summer by the foliage of towering maples. On its corner it had an old-time colonial door, with fanlights above it, opening on a long gloomy hall with a stairway to the chambers above. A door at the left entered the parlor. Beyond the end of the hall was the sitting-room lighted by triple windows on the right. Beyond them was a door which entered an L wherein were the kitchen, butler's pantry and entrance to the woodshed and barn. There were three bedrooms connected with the sitting-room. On the rear of the house was a veranda, entered from the kitchen and rear bedroom. It commanded the slope to the willowed shore of the river, or would have done so if it had not been thickly screened by woodbine.

My oldest brother, Loren, was traveling for a wholesale cigar factory. Burton and Arthur were in the academy. Arthur was soon to be married though he was not yet twenty years of age. He was going to run Aunt Hester Darling's farm and

live with her. Burton, now a big lad of eighteen, had engaged to teach a winter term of school.

I began my work at the academy within a day or two after my arrival. The principal was a big, brawny, keen-eyed Scot more than six feet tall, of the name of Stowell. He dressed well. His tone was commanding, his manner dignified. There were some two hundred boys and girls in this big school. I was a shy, sensitive, country lad. I was in the clothes which my older brother had outgrown. The other boys were inclined to take me lightly until one day the principal summoned me to his desk. He wished me to teach a class in penmanship. This I did in the large room of the principal, for many joined the class. Standing by the blackboard I made drawings more or less graceful and wrote sentences to be copied. I went, also, from seat to seat and showed the students how to hold the pen and use it fluently without fatigue. This was a small matter, yet it helped me to command the respect of the student body. After that I was more comfortable.

I had become a strong lad and had learned the art of wrestling in that countryside where it was the favored form of athletic exercise. All the trips and feints of the skilled wrestler were familiar to me. No lad of my size had ever been able to throw me. At the academy the boys of about my

own weight and strength, being untrained in that special art, were easy for me. One day a pompous and not very popular young man, much older and larger than I, proposed to test my skill. I hesitated, but my friends urged me on. We took hold in the collar and elbow method now no longer in use. My first quick trip and jerk swung him off his feet. They flew upward, and he came down, his shoulders touching the ground first. It was a fortunate throw which further improved my standing among the boys.

Still, in other forms of sport I was no match for them. I had had no training in baseball, and at first my awkwardness on the diamond was an embarrassment to me. My eye never gained the sureness of judgment to make me a first-class player. I began too late.

The publicity of a school so large was a constant trial to me. A bit overawed, I was too shy and sensitive to get the credit which was fairly my due in that first year or so. The boys reared in the rough give-and-take of town life had a self-confidence which I found it hard to acquire.

The crowd of boys and girls filed into the big assembly-room every morning while a very fat girl played a march on the organ. The stern-eyed professor stood watchfully by the procession near the entrance. Now and then he seized a boy by the

collar and roughly hauled him out of the line and shook him as a dog would shake a rat.

When all were seated the professor read a chapter from the Bible and uttered a brief prayer. Often some student was unexpectedly called to the platform for a recitation introduced by remarks more or less embarrassing. None so brave but he trembled at the danger of this glaring publicity. In a week or so my name was called in that tone of ironical praise for which the professor was much dreaded. I had some small skill in dialect and was loaded. I got by with my effort rather fortunately.

The assembly being dismissed, the students marched to their rooms. The professor taught in the assembly-room where I had a seat. He conducted the recitations in Greek, Latin, Advanced Algebra and Geometry. If one misconstrued a sentence he would laugh and shout in a tone of bitter irony. "*Mirabile dictu!*" Then every one joined in derisive laughter.

Once I saw poor Dennis Scannel seized by the collar and tumbled roughly from end to end of the platform because he had failed in a problem at the blackboard. I wonder not that I began to dread the sound of the academy bell. Yet I must not fail to say that Stowell was one of the best-meaning men that I have known.

I was getting hardened to the kind of thing of

which I have written. How different would have been the course of the next ten years if bad breaks and frustrations had not come upon me. When I look back upon my way of life I am reminded of a river which in an unexampled flood has found a new way to its destination.

Unfortunately for me and for a younger brother, our father was away from home trying to meet the problems which increased expenses, ill luck and faulty judgment had thrust upon him. My mother's health was failing. None of my older brothers was at home.

The boys who lived near us and sought our friendship were not of the best type. All forms of deviltry were familiar to them. My love of books was a thing they wondered at. They were good fellows, but fun-seeking was the main object of all their cerebration—billiards, horse-racing, secret smokers for obscene story-telling. It is fortunate that my character had been too securely formed to be much injured by these associations.

The worst thing that I got from it was the tobacco habit for which I doubtless had a hereditary liking. At fourteen I began secretly to use tobacco. I am convinced that there is nothing which so disqualifies the mind of youth for serious application to study as tobacco. In a growing lad it produces a kind of mental lethargy and breeds a

fondness for dreamy idling. That was its effect upon me.

One day in opening my grammar I found a passionate love-letter from one of the girls. It was suggestive and unsigned. I knew or thought that I knew who had written it. I did not like her. I tore it into bits and threw it in the stove. Fortunately, it had displeased me.

My next older brother had a singular sense of chivalry. He had imparted it to me. The lad had made me understand that if a girl lost her good name everybody was against her. She was exposed to a special danger which was not in the way of a boy. If she went wrong there was nothing for her but to be a Mary Prunner. I knew what that meant. Mary was a good-looking young woman who walked the streets in flashy dress. No man spoke to her save in the darkness of the night. She was one apart. When she passed people were wont to glance at her and smile and whisper to their companions. Her way those days was like that of the leper. What a fate, I thought, to be surrounded by this invisible wall!

Some man who had no part in her shame or her wretchedness had put her behind it in the lonely way she traveled. That was my reflection when I saw her. I pitied the girl and wondered what could be done to help her.

There were curious characters in the town who interested me so deeply that I was wont to follow them and try to engage them in conversation. There was a cheerful little man who had a gray throat beard under his chin. He was often walking along the street whistling a lively tune quite unmindful of those who passed him. The nickname of "Nutcake" signalized his thrift. Years before, he had taken his girl to a party and instead of inviting her to supper had offered her nutcakes which he had thoughtfully brought with him.

Many curious sayings were attributed to him, all strictly in character, but some were doubtless apocryphal. It was said that he once hurried down the street holding his hands apart and shouting: "Git out of my way, folks. I've got the exact measure of a door and must keep it till I git to the carpenter shop."

He liked big words and was often misspeaking them. He once said that thieves had "broke into the arsenal and stole all the ambition out of it." He spoke of the "Pope and the Vacuum." He said that his wife "had a very even temperature." I hung about this man a good deal, but was too young to get his confidence.

There was a sweet and gentle maiden lady beloved by all who knew her who thought croquet a very dangerous game.

Demetrius Ypsilanti Pierce was noted for his glib, unemotional profanity. There was no note of vanity, no display of ill nature in it. Often it was kindly and devoted to the most worthy purposes.

He said one day in a gentle tone of remonstrance to one of my schoolmates: "Good G— Almighty boy! If you keep runnin' away from school you won't have anything in your head by an' by, but a lot of blanketty blank deviltry."

Every one respected Demetrius, for in spite of his gift for undue emphasis he was a good man. His talk was heard in some of the best parlors.

Paddy McMann looked like a gnarled and aged cedar tree deformed by the winds. He was bent and twisted by rheumatism, yet he sawed wood for his living. He had a kindly voice and manner and the richest old-country Irish dialect that I have ever heard. Often I stood by him as he worked charmed by the strangeness and the music of it.

There were many people in the village who had what Lowell has called "a divinely illiterate" fashion of speech. The blood-warmth of their idioms delighted me. Mrs. McCormick, a merry-hearted Irish woman, did our washing. I can never forget how she sang and danced at the tub and on her way to the clothes-line. Yet she might well have been filled with sadness.

"I don't stand still long enough for trouble to burn a hole in me petticoat," she was wont to say.

She reared her children in the fear of God and gave them a respect for all things of good report.

I submit that this was a great saying of hers:

"Sure I think that God smiles when the poor sing an' weary feet are cuttin' a caper."

Many like people fresh from the Emerald Isle had settled among us—the only foreigners we knew. They were hard-working, thrifty, hospitable folk.

Father O'Driscoll, a handsome, well-fed, richly dressed, jolly man of middle age, who drove a sleek-coated fast mare on a shining gig, was their shepherd. Right well he tended his flock. What a glow of genial respectability in his figure as he walked the streets in his high hat and white choker and perfectly fitted black garments! He was everybody's friend. He was dignified and good to look upon, as a representative of the greatest personality our world has seen ought to be. There was no pose of superiority about him. He was just a human being living in this world and loving the things which lightened its cares and made for happiness. He greeted one with a merry jest. He was a friend and counselor of the humblest of his flock, forgiving their follies and filling the young with a desire for learning. He was a power for good which it would be difficult to measure.

Not quite so much may be said for the Protestant ministers. The best of them were learned, able and good men. Their churches were filled. But the high-brow pose was on some of them!—a fatal thing in a minister. Those days men of a liberal education were often as those lost and wandering on the cold and lonely heights of their own moral and intellectual achievements. They were like men shouting from the top of a precipice to those below. Looking back at them my feeling is that most of the ministers in our town gave one the impression that they had climbed to summits of learning and goodness inaccessible to common men. They had that certain condescension which Mr. Lowell had observed in foreigners. They were not of us.

Our ablest was a Scot of the name of James Gardener, who, with undoubted eloquence, kept the fire of hell burning brightly in that stronghold of liberalism. He was a specialist on the wrath of God. He interested me because of his gold-headed cane and silk hat and vivid phrasing.

What a help it would have been in those days of trouble if some one of them had come down to the level earth and found me and my brothers and taken time to win our friendship and confidence and lend us the strength of their hands! That is the kind of thing that the Christian church should ever be doing. Arguments! There is no argu-

ment like the friendly, leading hand, especially when it is given to the young. Only one kind of argument is worth while in religion: that which concerns itself with the strength of one's faith in a loving and merciful God and one's sense of duty to his neighbor. I remember that I longed to know these men, but was in such awe of them that I gave it up. I am not now speaking of the remarkable men of the cloth connected with the university.

This gallery of portraits would be incomplete without that of the amiable old soldier who had long served a friend of ours as gardener. The daughter of the house was to be married. A day or two before the wedding her mother was sitting on the front veranda. The old soldier came to the gate and beckoned to her.

"Miss Brown," he commanded, "come here."

"You come here," the lady answered.

"No, I ain't a-comin'," said the soldier. "You come here."

The lady, knowing that his commands were well meant, went out to the gate to see him. The old soldier drew a twenty-dollar bill from his pocket.

"Here, I want you to take this an' buy suthin' fer Mabel," he said.

"You keep your money," the lady answered. "It is not at all necessary for you to give Mabel a present."

COMING UP THE ROAD

"You do as I tell ye," he insisted. "It's none o' your business what I do with my money. I wouldn't know what to buy. If I was to git suthin' you wouldn't give it hell room."

There was moisture in his eyes, and the man had his way.

The most remarkable character of that place and time was the patent-right man. He exerted an influence on the fortunes of our family which can not be overlooked.

In the time of my boyhood there was sure to be in every considerable village a patent-right man. He had discovered an easy short-cut to wealth. He never arrived at his destination, but was always in sight of the promised land. Invention had played a large part in his life. It had saved him from hard work in and out of school. The saving of labor was to him the noblest of all purposes. His contrivances were for the defeat of the primal curse. In his view a patent was a certificate of genius. He had vast conceit, boundless optimism and considerable ingenuity. He gave his time to promotion. His best invention was himself. That, he promoted with good clothes, the most expensive hotels, membership in the church and a winning atmosphere of opulence. Generally his wife was shabby. His children were ragged or threadbare but he looked like a gentleman of wealth and lei-

sure. Indeed he was the best-looking and about the most genial and interesting person in the village. He meant well. He intended to make everybody rich who would allow him to do so. He was not a bad man, but he had a capacity for believing himself, and this was no small achievement.

The banker, the butcher, the grocer, the baker and the tailor had made varying investments in his genius, especially the banker who had helped him in securing patents and in manufacturing models. They doubted and feared, but they also hoped and prayed. His magnificence had assumed the nature of a tax on the community. He owed every one. Therefore every one was, in a sense, his partner. This backing made him a peril to the unwary. With profound belief in himself he had become a most capable convincer.

I remember when one of these gentlemen came to our house. He was a large handsome man six feet tall, a little below middle age. His salient feature was a luxuriant pair of brown side-whiskers. His opulent look and manner, the far-seeing expression of his face when he expounded the laws of nature with which his invention was allied, impressed us. With impassioned eloquence he set forth the need of it. The average profit on each machine was fifty dollars. There were five thousand farmers in St. Lawrence County. Sup-

pose that only one in five bought it. The profit would be fifty thousand dollars in only one county, and there were thousands of them in the United States. It was very convincing and largely because the man believed his own assertions.

Nothing definite was said as to the expense of convincing the farmers, of the cost of a plant and of manufacturing and delivering the product in large quantities. He had had estimates from Deacon Sackrider, a local hardware merchant, and that was enough to provide a basis for argument. The upper rungs in the ladder were supplied by his optimism.

The patent-right man soon persuaded my father, with the help of others, that the way to sudden wealth was to buy an interest in his patented invention. Unfortunately, my father was not a business man. One who has spent many years in the narrowed life of a remote farm has little knowledge of the problems of the pushing trading world, of the pitfalls and perils that lie in untried ways.

It would only be necessary for him to indorse a note for so many thousand dollars. They would get the money at the bank, go to manufacturing and selling and pay the note out of their profits.

The conservative farmer was wedded to his ancient plan. Not one in five or one in forty would buy, not, at least, until the excellence of the inven-

tion had been proved. It would take years—not weeks—and a vast expenditure to accomplish that. In filling the few orders taken infinite difficulties arose. The manufacturer could not fill ten orders a month on time to say nothing of fifty. Deliveries were slow, expensive and hazardous. Often the product was damaged in transit. Some one had to go and set it up and put it in operation. Generally a skilled mechanic was needed to complete the process. Soon they were computing losses instead of profits.

Moreover, a good part of the sum received from the note had to be applied to the debts of the patent-right man. Soon he was in hot water. The manufacturer was calling for money.

Suddenly the climax! The note came due. My father had to sell his farm to pay it. He had had a reasonable competence for those days. The fruit of many years of hard work and privation was nearly all swept away. We were poor, and every one of us who could help in the problem of living must do it.

I had become well acquainted with the patent-right man. He was a genial soul and an entertaining talker. I went to the Methodist Church with him and his wife one Sunday. The church was in the midst of a great revival. After the meeting there was a conference as to a big demon-

COMING UP THE ROAD

stration for the saving of souls in the next week. I recall an ingenious suggestion of the patent-right man. It was this: At a point in the exhortation to be agreed upon, every member of the church present should break into shouts of approval to be continued with growing intensity for at least a minute thus producing an electrical effect on the unconverted. There was so much of the flavor of the patent machine in this method of salvation that every one smiled, even the inventor himself.

Summer had come again. My father was away traveling with the patent-right man. Burton had gone east with a drove of cattle and was working on Lake Champlain. My brother Loren's first year in business had been a failure. He was considerably in debt, and my father had had to help him. He was away trying to make good. My mother, my grandfather, my younger brother Will and I were living at home.

My mother was in poor health, but her courage was sublime. I helped her with her work and tended the garden. Evenings I read to her aloud. *David Copperfield*, *Nicholas Nickelby*, *Bleak House* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* were the books we read. Our cares and troubles left us under the evening lamp. I think that *David Copperfield* touched me deeper than any book that I read in those days of my youth. The humor and truth

of it, the love and faithfulness it portrayed were like a sowing in fertile soil when spring has come. How much my years are indebted to those hours with my mother under the evening lamp I dare not try to estimate.

There was to be a great and much advertised Fourth of July celebration in Ogdensburg. I wanted to go but had no money. Then it was that I did a thing which was really good for me. Nor have I ever ceased to look back upon it with amusement and satisfaction. I got a job under Boss McCormick on the road, breaking rocks with a heavy hammer at a dollar and a quarter a day. I was a strong and growing lad in my fifteenth year, and the work was not a burden to me. Thus I came to know, as I could not have done otherwise, the rough-handed and rougher-tongued workers. Those who have read *Eben Holden* will see where I got certain vivid colors which are an important part of it. How often in better years when I met Pat Devlin—then growing old and feeble—he was wont to say:

“Gawd bless ye, man! Do ye remember the time we worked together under Boss McCormick?”

It grieved my mother on account of the associations. Yet I think that she got some satisfaction from the knowledge that I could be relied on for work when necessary. I gave her a part of the

money and with the rest of it went to the Fourth of July celebration.

I went with a boy of about my own age of the name of Fred Otis. A crowded excursion train leaving at seven o'clock in the morning carried us to De Kalb Junction where we changed cars for Ogdensburg. We rode on a platform car in a shower of cinders.

It was my first ride on a railroad train. However, in hours of play, now and then, I had haunted the sidings at the railroad station and acquired great skill in mounting moving freight-cars and dismounting from the last car at rather high speed often putting my life in danger.

Ogdensburg—a town of ten thousand people those days—was to me a magnificent and wonderful city. The booming guns, the snapping fire-crackers, the variety of sound, the crowded streets, the great river, the big houses and stores, the lawns and gardens delighted us. We wandered, seeing and hearing, until we were weary.

We had to do something to give ourselves a share in the greatness of the city. We felt reckless. We decided on a small venture in depravity. It would be a drink of lager beer. We chose it because it had a reputation and was inexpensive. We would buy one glass. He would drink half of it. I would drain the cup of evil. We would

know what it was to be sunk in iniquity, to taste the deadly poison of which we had heard so much. I think that nothing was so ably advertised in the land we knew.

We went to a bar and paid five cents for a big glass of beer and drank it although astonished by its bitterness. The result was not pleasing. It had a bad taste. With a deep sense of guilt—momentarily grateful—we went and bought some big cigars and sat down in the park. The cigars looked right in size and shape but they wouldn't "draw." We sucked hard. We sucked so hard that we began to perspire. No air would come through them. They were solid. We wouldn't give up.

Otis had a piece of wire in his pocket. With this he punched a flue lengthwise in each cigar. Thus we were able to get action and reaction. We settled down to enjoy our crossing the pale of respectability. The cigar didn't seem to like me. It sputtered and complained. A curious taste came out of it. There was a lack of congeniality in our relations. It was immediately apparent. I have always thought that my cigar had an abdominal system. I hurled it from me. After that day cigars were in my view like Indians—hostile and friendly.

"Do you feel anything?" Otis asked.

"No, just kind o' sick," I answered. "I hate the taste of beer, and I like Canton cigars better."

COMING UP THE ROAD

“So do I. Maybe beer and cigars don’t go good together.”

The rest of that day I had a sense of depravity that weighed upon me. It was a wearisome day of wandering and seeing and listening. There were the bands, the oration, the procession of Terribles—men and boys in rags and fantastic false faces blowing horns and drumming on tin pans and cutting capers.

We stayed to hear the sunset guns and to see the fireworks—to me a strange and wonderful sight. We got to Canton in the middle of the night very sleepy and tired. I went to bed with that terrible secret hidden in my breast—the drinking of forbidden beer. I felt very wicked.

CHAPTER IX

I TRY NEW THINGS AND STRANGE ADVENTURES

ONE of the great attractions at the county fair that autumn was a talking-machine invented by a man whose name was then little known—Thomas A. Edison. Great crowds gathered about the booth in which an operator sat by the instrument that rested on a table.

In a grinding, distant tone it introduced itself and sang in a scratchy voice a little song of which I remember these words:

“Whoa, Emma!

Whoa, Emma!

Emma you put me in such a dilemma!”

The age of wonders had begun.

Soon thereafter the new electric light was exhibited in front of the Town Hall one evening. It hissed and sizzled in a globe, some ten inches in diameter, between two lengths of carbon. It illumined the front of the building and a large section of the street with a light, in color like that of the moon. A man lectured to a small audience about it in the hall. He said that it was to be the

light of the future. No one, save certain of the college professors, believed his prediction or showed much interest in the subject. To them it was just a "newfangled notion"—another patent right.

A new toy was in the stores. It was two diaphragms of tough skin stretched on a mouthpiece with a long thread running between them. The thread carried the vibration of the diaphragm so that two people an eighth of a mile or more apart could easily talk together with the mouthpieces, their voices traveling over the taut thread. Here was the first step toward another wonder. Improved media and an electric current were only needed to convey the human voice to distances limited only by the power of the current.

Late in the autumn Burton left us to go to Wisconsin to visit former neighbors of ours. We were not to see again his erect and towering figure.

I was in school that winter and making a rather poor record. I was restless and shared the worries of my mother and presently discovered that I was increasing them. I remember that I was eager to do something to help but knew not how. I got a job posting the books for a livery-stable at which I spent a good share of my leisure. In this way I earned a little money. My father was away much of the time struggling with his problem. It was a hard year for us.

I am sure that my standing in the community, my efficiency as a student and a family helper was much impaired by the temptation to whirl ivory balls around a table covered with green cloth. The good people of that town had many deep convictions. This was one of them: that the green level of the billiard table was at the top of the downward way. Just beyond it was the steep slant that hurries one to destruction. The billiard-player was a time-waster. To waste time was to waste money and lose a proper respect for it. That was a deadly sin. They had a high regard for money. And why not? It was the rarest of all the commodities they knew. When a man got hold of money it was put in close confinement. Often it went out of business for months. Bills were paid only once a year. There were certain men who gave their small coins exercise and fresh air in secret sessions at the poker table. They were regarded as reckless profligates who would come to a bad end.

Now a boy loves to make things whirl. I had discovered in myself an unusual gift for the control of ivory balls on a level surface. Even now when I hear the click of them the old fascination comes over me, and I seek the table.

I remember that a pressing need arose, when my father was not at home, for the sum of five dollars. I went to Mr. Brooks and borrowed it.

He was a money-lender who was said to be a rich man. He lived in a small house near the railroad crossing. He was an old gentleman with a throat beard, a husky voice and irascible manners. He was one of the most remarkable characters I have known. Every one called him "Bully Brooks." I remember that he had many enemies and that he distrusted and denounced most of the well-known citizens.

He was often boasting of his strength and vigor. He passed our house afoot on his way to the village at a kind of gallop the like of which children are wont to exhibit in play. As he passed he was generally talking to himself, now and then with emphatic gestures. He was a Methodist who claimed to have received an unmistakable assurance of salvation. He was equally positive that damnation was in store for certain of his neighbors. I doubt not that he was sincere in these thoughts. He would often stop one on the street to present his interpretation of some passage of Scripture. He was a married man, but his wife was a mystery. She was never seen, probably because of ill health and shyness, and further, I think, because no one ever went to his house save for the purpose of borrowing money—a matter with which she had nothing to do.

Though he was a mark for ridicule and most un-

popular, I think that there was much good in this eccentric man. I have never forgotten the day when I went to pay my debt to him. He put his hand on my shoulder and spoke very kindly when he said that my father had paid him.

The ill-spent winter ended. Summer had come again. I remember vividly an evening when I sat with my Uncle Charley on the back veranda. From the end of the veranda we had stood a moment looking up at the sky. He quoted the beautiful lines of Shelley which speak of the wind shepherding the clouds at nightfall. Crickets were chirping as we sat together in the growing dusk. He said:

"I love that sound. It reminds me of a stanza by a little-known Canadian poet:

"The cricket chirps all day—
 O gentle summer stay!—
 The squirrel eyes askance the chestnuts
 browning,
 The wild fowl flies afar,
 Across the foamy bar,
 And hastens southward ere the winter
 skies are frowning."

He had read much and studiously. With a rare correctness of taste he had found many of the peaks of literature and loved to tarry in these high places. I had an evening of enchantment while his sympathetic voice gave me the treasures of his memory.

"Thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars," came from his lips. They were from George Eliot, Shelley, Blake, Coleridge, Cowper, Longfellow, Holmes. There was a bit from Milton which comes back to me when I think of that summer evening:

"And west winds with musky wing
Down the cedarn alleys fling
Nard and cassia's balmy smells."

That evening there were musky wings in the alley of my youth.

"Before I go," he said at last, "I will repeat some lines that are familiar to you."

He began:

"And now as I close my task, subduing my desire to linger yet, these faces fade away. But one face, shining on me like a Heavenly light by which I see all other objects, is above them and beyond them all.

"And that remains. I turn my head and see it, in its beautiful serenity, beside me. My lamp burns low, and I have written far into the night; but the dear presence, without which I were nothing, bears me company.

"Oh Agnes, oh my soul . . . so may I, when the realities are melting from me like the shadows which I now dismiss, still find thee near me, pointing upward!"

Indeed I had not forgotten the passage having read it with deep emotion—the closing words of *David Copperfield*.

How could one devise a more perfect ending for a great story than this calm, deep-toned, cello-like melody with a kind of starlight shining through it after the close of its long day?

We had sat for an hour or so in darkness. I arose and turned to enter the open door to the kitchen and saw or thought that I saw a tall dark form standing near me. Silently it receded as I looked. The thought had flashed upon me that my brother Burton had come home, perhaps only because I had seemed to see a tall figure and the boy was much in my thought. Why did I instantly think of him? Was it one of those illusions that come when one suddenly tries to use his eyes in the darkness? That view of it I have accepted. However, the truth is my brother was in sore trouble that night and I have liked to think that his spirit had come home and made me feel its presence. My mother came in with my younger brother. I think that they had spent the evening at a neighbor's house. I went to bed thinking of Burton.

In the morning another bolt fell upon us. It was a telegram from Wisconsin. Burton was paralyzed and helpless. His father had better come imme-

diately. He was summoned and was soon going west on this heart-breaking errand.

They returned. The boy was in an invalid chair. Above his hips he was the same as ever, but his legs were gone. The nerves which controlled their motor muscles had ceased to act. They were almost dead. He had been walking logs—a most strenuous kind of exercise for one not accustomed to it. He had overdone and probably been immersed in icy water. Anyhow he had got a chill and paralysis had followed. No doubt it was a severe case of the thing now known as infantile paralysis. To all the doctors of that time it was a mystery. They knew not what to do.

My brother was cheerful and full of hope and courage. He would soon be all right again. But the truth is we were now facing a new and more serious problem than any we had known.

Doctor Ames came often to see him. This doctor was a man of advanced years and of great skill and learning whom I have described in *Eben Holden*. He was the absent-minded, joke-loving physician who never kept books. He knew no object but that of giving relief to human suffering. Always he came in without knocking, and then we could hear him shuffling through the hall. His head with a fringe of wavy white hair around its bald peak was large and picturesque. His smooth-

shaved face had a kindly thoughtful expression. He sat down by his patient and questioned him in a gentle tone. Then he looked downward, soberly chewing his quid. In a moment he said:

"I've just been in to see Lon Gibson. He was up in the woods the other day where he caught a cub bear. He was making off with the cub when the old she-bear came along and claimed it. Well, ye know Lon is a stubborn cuss. He got into an argument with the old bear as to which owned the cub. She knew that she was right and wouldn't give in. He didn't have his gun with him and so his argument lacked the force which carries conviction. One of her gestures hit his right arm and I had to go and mend it. When I was working on him he said:

"'There's one thing I've noticed about a bear. He never leaves his gun at home. It's a short-range weapon, but it's always loaded and when it goes off you know something has happened.'"

We were laughing at this bit of droll description when the doctor turned to my mother and said with a serious look:

"I think that all we can do now is to rub and knead the hips and legs of the patient. It should be done vigorously for ten minutes three or four times a day."

That was all that medical skill could do for us.

We gave our hands to the task prescribed with unremitting faithfulness. But with all our trying and the unfailing courage of the stricken lad to help us we could accomplish little. While the summer lasted my brother was able to go about on the sidewalks of the village in his wheel-chair with the strength of his own hands. A serene, cheerful and gentle spirit had come to him. If he had a moment of despair it was hidden from us. He was soon a beloved figure. Often the house was full of his friends. He had a great love of music and a fine deep voice, and he enjoyed singing. Once my father took him away on the cars to consult a celebrated physician in Vermont of whom we had heard, a pathetic, exhausting and fruitless quest.

Winter returned. My father had wisely given up the patent route to the recovery of his lost competence. In summer he rode among the farmers buying cattle for a local butcher. This gave a small but sure income—enough to keep the wolf from the door.

Some local men of means had been persuaded to allow the patent-right man to make them rich. They were successful business men. They thought that they saw their way to the glittering goal.

I was familiar with all the arguments. I knew them by heart. They had assumed in my view the nature of eternal verities. I wanted to go to work.

I TRY NEW THINGS

My father was in need of my help. The patent-right man had confidence in my ability to convince the farmer. I was only sixteen years of age. My father was willing that I should try it. My mother objected because of my age. There was much discussion of the matter. The problem of life was now more pressing than ever. If I could help—why not? There was a cutter and a horse in the stable. The horse needed exercise.

So I had my way. I set out one winter morning with a model to try my luck with those arguments in the soundness of which I had implicit faith. I was glib, courteous, self-confident and energetic. Unfortunately, I succeeded very well at first. My standing with the firm was established that week. My commissions amounted to a considerable sum. My work was praised. I could have employment as long as I wished it.

Nothing worse could have happened to me. I did not know the truth. The inventor himself and the promoters were misled in the whole matter. Looking back upon it I would say that the thing we were trying to press upon the people had little or no special value. We promised more than we could do. Where two or three trades are employed in the manufacture of an article something is sure to go wrong unless one's organization is perfect. With no intent to deceive, my youthful and opti-

mistic imagination intensified the colors. Moreover, it led me into sundry extravagances. In my conceit I thought that I was making money for myself and the promoters. I incurred debts. I employed for a time a singular character of the name of Thrust Miles to go with me and drive and take care of my horse mostly because he amused me.

It was what might be expected from a lad of sixteen wholly unfamiliar with life and away from home who had deceived himself with the notion that he was an able and successful man.

I was a large, blond, amiable and interesting child turned loose in a candy shop. I had an unusual familiarity with literature and some gift for talk. I could repeat immortal poems, but I was a tender, callow youth young for my age. I had no more common sense, no more knowledge of values and proportions, than a playful pup who chews up his master's shirt that has fallen from the line, roaring like a lion, and thinking that his dooryard is the world.

I would gladly forget if I could the whole sordid, miserable adventure—the long journeys in bitter cold weather, the noisy drunken obscenities that filled a part of each night in the rustic inns and, above all, the friendly people who were often disappointed with the thing they bought. I had made

sundry experiments in dissipation, but fortunately I did not acquire a liking for it. The thing most to be regretted which came of it was a habit of exaggeration. A year or thereabout I was engaged in this task of traveling in the north country and Canada. On the whole it had been a losing venture, for my employers and for me. It was largely because of hard times, bad debts and costs of collection and of correcting errors. I do not hesitate to say that I was one of the errors. Nor would I fail to speak of an error of judgment which abundantly proves my contention.

I was traveling in one of the counties of Canada—I have forgotten which. I had taken an order from a man who wished to retain it in his possession for a week or so to make sure of his plans. I took a copy of the order leaving the original with him. I should have indicated on the copy that it was a duplicate of a conditional order, but did not realize the importance of doing so. I knew little of proper business procedure those days.

I do not recall just how it happened that this order went in to the shop with others in my possession. I think that they were hurriedly dispatched by a messenger who happened to be going to town. Anyhow I had forgotten to mention the nature of the transaction. I thought of it after the package had gone, but I would see the patent-right man in

a day or two and would then explain the matter. My seeing him was unexpectedly delayed.

He had a plan of business procedure of which I did not know. When orders reached him they were deposited in the bank as security for his loans, the bank collecting payment as it came due. When I saw him he was naturally indignant. The man had repudiated the order as a forgery. I was frightened, but I had had no intention of deceiving any one and no motive for doing so. Of my good intentions I am sure that all parties were wholly convinced at the time. The order was withdrawn and canceled and I went on with my work as usual. In the fifty-two years that have passed since then I have shown no inclination or talent for forgery.

I mention the matter only to show how easily and innocently a boy of small experience and of my peculiar incapacities, out in the world alone, can get into trouble.

My career with the patent machine ended in northern Vermont. A young friend from my home town was working with me. We rode about the country and accomplished little. We were both too fond of fun. We had jolly companions, and we were as jolly as they. Free of all restraint youth had its fling. We played billiards at the hotel. We had a part in some rather wild adventures. I remember that one of them was a midnight ride

with some young men across the border. It turned out to be a smuggling excursion in the course of which I made myself very ill with sardines and cheese and whisky. I knew nothing of the purpose of the ride. Here again I had innocently put myself in the way of trouble.

The day of reckoning came when our hotel bill had to be paid. A cousin of my friend who lived near indorsed a note for us. We were now free to return to our homes. We went to our room for consultation. Our past was frowning on us. What about the future? I looked into the sober face of my friend. As I thought of the absurd follies of the year now ending I lay down upon the bed and burst into laughter although I felt more like crying. Indeed I had a very poor opinion of myself. The family was probably worrying about me. I was in debt here and there. Yet, feeling as I did the seriousness of the situation, I laughed. Through life it has been my singular way of expressing emotion save that produced by sorrow. It has been for me, I think, a source of strength and courage and refreshment in time of trouble. It has helped me to carry on. It has afforded much amusement to my friends.

My companion caught the infection of my laughter, but declared that he was going home. I would not go home in disgrace, I was going

on to Middlebury to get a job at some kind of honest work. When I returned I would take with me money well made, and the glory of success.

I took a train for Middlebury that day having written a long letter of courageous and cheerful assurance to my mother. On the whole my trial of the patent business had been a failure. I was glad to be clear of it.

I thought of the curious characters I had met and their sayings, of adventures which had come to me, especially of my ride on the tin peddler's cart in Canada. The road was muddy. The rags and deacon skins were heaped up behind us. At the foot of the hill the front wheels had dropped into a soft spot, suddenly throwing the top load forward upon our backs and pushing us from the seat. I landed suddenly on the back of the horse. I slid sidewise on the frightened animal, my heel catching in the hold-back strap, my head dragging backward in the mud just in front of the left wheel while the horse was running away. I was helpless. If my heel had let go the load would have crushed me. Suddenly the wheels stopped. Some one released my foot and dragged me out of the road. I had been nearly smothered in the soft mud. My head and shoulders were caked with it. A man had caught the running horse and stopped him. That had been a close call.

They took me to a near house and gave me dry clothes and helped me to clean my garments. I could never forget the kind hospitality of the Canadian farmers. There are no better people in the world. Being a mere lad, cleanly and of good manners, I presume that I excited their interest and sympathy. They could not do too much for me.

I recalled how one of them had driven me some twenty miles to a distant fair. It was late when we started for home, and he had drunk too much. At first he sang and amused himself and me with story-telling. As the night drew on he grew quiet. We rode through black darkness in silence. Being weary I soon fell asleep. I awoke about the middle of the night. We were standing still somewhere. It was raining and so dark that I could see nothing. My companion was asleep at my side. I awoke him. Such a sense of mystery I have never known.

"Where are we?" he asked.

"I don't know," was my answer.

He got out of the buggy and began to explore the territory.

"By the Lord Harry!" he exclaimed in a moment. "It's the hitching bar in front of Algeier's store where we stopped on our way to the fair. We're ten miles from home."

COMING UP THE ROAD

I recalled how he had upset the buggy in turning around, throwing us into a pool of rain-water.

A degree of wisdom had come to me from this ill-spent year or so of my life. I began to make plans for the future. When I got home I would go to school and study as I had never studied. I would show them that I could do good work.

I began to revise my character. I was not at all pleased with it. There would be no more foolish adventures in my life. I prayed to God that He would help me in the days to come.

I wonder if every man who seeks aid above himself and who has come to my height of years can see in looking backward, as I seem now to see, in all the shifting, baffled purposes, in all the regretted failures and changed plans of his life, some subtle power, call it what we may, working to develop the best part of him? It has been quite beyond his comprehension. When at last the dust has settled in his way he looks back upon it and begins to see the plan which, in spite of him, has held its purpose. This is far from being fatalism. My looking backward has shown me, and I think clearly, that this helpful power is only for those who seek it and who take its baffling with cheerful resignation. One must be doing his part in the matter.

I was in a rather wholesome frame of mind on

my way to Middlebury. The things that came of it were what the people of old would have called a mystery. To me they were a disappointment. Now I seem to understand them.

One thing I had observed. All the fools I knew had been men who were for ever talking. I had heard a man say:

"You can be a good deal of a fool an' nobody'll ever know it if ye keep yer mouth shut. A man's mouth is the most dangerous part of him."

My father had been wont to say that a wise man would let other people do the most of the talking. It was a maxim among those of our countryside that a man's doing should be bigger than his talk. I resolved that I would not talk too much.

Perhaps even now I am violating this principle. But writing is different. One does not have to be rude in refusing to read a book.

CHAPTER X

A SUMMER OF STRANGE ADVENTURES

I ARRIVED at Middlebury and went to the Addison House kept by a kindly gentleman of the name of Rider. I ate my supper. I was always hungry those days. There was a billiard-room. I had a natural gift for billiards and played an expert game considering my age. A good billiard-table was a joy to me. I played a game of billiards. This indulgence rarely cost me anything, since it was the custom for the loser to pay for the use of the table. I won the game and went to bed.

In the morning I told Mr. Rider that I was seeking a job. He had heard of my game of billiards the evening before. He proposed that he would give me my board if I would tend the room and keep the tables in good condition. Meanwhile I could look for work more to my liking.

Having only a little money I accepted the offer, not without a pang, knowing as I did that it was far from the kind of thing that I ought to be doing. Soon thereafter one evening after the players had gone to supper I was brushing a table when a voice interrupted me.

"Boy," it said, "where do you come from?"

The voice proceeded from an elderly gentleman sitting near me. He had a grave and kindly face adorned with a white mustache and imperial.

"From Canton, St. Lawrence County, New York," I answered.

"The home of Silas Wright!" he exclaimed as he arose and approached me. "Silas Wright was the greatest statesman our country has known."

"We are proud of him," I answered.

"What a pair of broad shoulders!" he exclaimed. "Boy, you are like the son of Peleus."

I only smiled at this sally knowing nothing of Peleus or his son.

"Son of Peleus, why are you engaged in this menial task?" he inquired.

I told him that I was looking for work more to my liking.

"My house shall be your home as long as you will stay there," he declared. "Go and pack up your things and say good-by to Mr. Rider. You shall have no worse job than that of putting up with my hospitality until you find a better stopping-place."

The offer was made with an air of full-hearted, princely generosity. It was grateful to me. I sought and obtained a release from Mr. Rider and packed my things and went with the stranger. We

walked through the village and across the bridge to his home, I with a bag in my hand.

A pretty girl of about my own age admitted us.

"Hello, Lizzie," he said. "Here is a high stepper from St. Lawrence County of the name of Bachelor."

Turning to me he added: "Behold my beautiful daughter, Elizabeth."

The girl greeted me cordially, and we entered. Supper was ready she said. We sat down at the table. The gentleman explained that his wife was away visiting her sister in a distant town and that he and Lizzie had the house to themselves. He had graduated from Middlebury with John Godfrey Saxe. I had read the witty poet now and then with delight and was able to quote a stanza which had stuck in my memory:

"How many of the critic class—
Would they profit by my tale—
Resemble the conceited ass
Who criticized the nightingale."

My host was greatly pleased at this.

"I am delighted, sir, that you have a taste for poetry," he said. "I am myself a poet whose talent has not yet won recognition. I, sir, am a flower born to blush unseen."

He then repeated to me a poem of his in blank

verse. I remember that it was a pastoral poem in the fashion of *The Deserted Village* and that it pleased me. It was just a fairly good poem. I did not know then that fairly good poems are like fairly good eggs. He outlined for me the history of his life. He had been an officer in the Civil War and had spent the most of his life in Middlebury.

Supper over he said that if I would excuse him he had some business in town. I would find his daughter an excellent entertainer.

She was a slim blonde girl with blue eyes, a well-molded face and engaging manners. She played the guitar cleverly and sang as she touched the strings. She told of the college life, and we talked of our school-days and our favorite authors. At eleven o'clock her father had not returned. I was soon to learn that he was universally addressed as "Colonel."

She suggested that perhaps I would like to go to bed. She lighted some candles and showed me to the spare room above stairs. At its door we bade each other good night, and I went to bed and to sleep.

An hour or so later I was awakened by a loud voice calling my name. It alarmed me. I sat up in a cold perspiration. I heard footsteps in the hall. The door opened. The light of a candle poured into the darkness of my room. My host

stood in the doorway, the candle in his hand. He held it above his head, peering at me and saying in a tragic voice:

"How ill this taper burns! Ha! who comes here? Cold drops of sweat hang on my trembling flesh."

He picked up my shoes with his disengaged hand and flung them into the hall. He gathered my clothing in a pile and said:

"Noble youth! I have need of your company."

I perceived that he had need also of my support.

"Will you do me the honor, sir, of sharing my bed with me?"

What could I say? It looked like a difficult undertaking, but I could not say no. I gathered up my garments and went with him. As we walked through the gloomy hall he sang a couplet of the sentimental song: *When You and I Were Young, Maggie*.

I pulled his boots. When he was ready for bed he picked up a walking-stick and began to thrust at me by way of demonstrating his skill as a fencer, forcing me back to the wall, with the point of it against my breast.

"Die, false friend!" he hissed.

My only shield was a nightshirt and I knew not what more was coming.

I slept with him or rather I tried to. It was a

hard job, but I did my best with it. The man's nerves were afflicting him, more or less, and he was afraid to be alone in the darkness. When we had put out the light he wanted to visit. He told me of his great strength and courage and of his lifelong devotion to the art of poetry. Lying there in the darkness he repeated to me a long poem which he had written soon after leaving college. By and by he began snoring with a rhythmic diction like that of the poem. It was a hard night—one of the worst I had known. I have met many poets since then, but he is the only one I have slept with.

Next morning Lizzie apologized for the conduct of her father. She was clearly distressed by it.

After breakfast the colonel, now sober again, said to me, "O noble youth! If you will come with me I shall be glad to present you to some of my excellent, good friends."

We went into the town together. He introduced me to various men of business on the street. I told them that I was seeking occupation. They were polite, but they had nothing to offer me. It may be—it is indeed likely—that they thought my company a poor recommendation.

Presently the colonel said:

"Now come with me and I will present you to my friend the philosopher."

We entered a building, and I followed him up three flights of stairs to its upper floor. There, in a small room under a sky-light, we found the philosopher. He sat cobbling on a shoemaker's bench. He was an old Scot of about the colonel's age. A fur cap covered his bald head. He had a brown beard, a serious look and manner and gray eyes. The colonel introduced me with glowing adjectives. The cobbler greeted us without rising and continued his work. We sat down in a pair of rickety old chairs. A shabby lounge lay along the wall under a small window of dusty panes. On a shelf was a row of mended boots. The upper walls sloped to the sky-light. Odors of wax and leather filled the air. The philosopher paused and looked up at me saying gravely:

"Young man, do not let the splendors of my home embarrass you. I was reared in the lap of luxury. I can not be content with cheap and simple things."

The colonel arose and with gestures began to quote Milton's apostrophe to Satan on his throne. Half-way through it his memory failed him, but I was able to supply the words. Ignorant as I was I happened to know the passage—a happy coincidence. The colonel sang my praises and proposed that they should drink to the health of their new friend. The philosopher put down his shoe and

tools and went to a closet and brought a bottle half-full of alcohol and some glasses.

"Only two," said the colonel. "My young friend, I am sure, does not taste the cheering cup. I would know it by the look of his eyes that shine like the morning."

They diluted the alcohol with water and drank. In the midst of their potation the philosopher said:

"I am now able to recall that passage from Burns of which we were speaking last night."

Then a stanza of Scotland's bard came from his lips delightfully read.

It was a kind of magic room—a place where these two human wrecks reveled in romance and illusion forgetting their disappointments. There they spent their days and evenings filled with the thoughts of great men and watered alcohol.

I left them together and set out for the colonel's home. I had had enough of the colonel's company. Another night of poetry and fencing was in prospect. I must get out of Middlebury at once. I would go to Brandon and try my luck there. At the colonel's house I told Lizzie of my resolution.

"I know that you are in trouble," I said. "If I can help you I will stay until your mother returns."

"I am sure that he will not leave me at night if I am alone," she answered.

I packed my bag and left her in the dooryard. I liked her. She was friendly and sympathetic—a kind of little mother. We stood for a moment looking into each other's eyes. I thanked her and left a word of gratitude for her father and we said good-by again. There was just a touch of tender romance in our parting. Somehow we knew that we should not meet again. Twenty-five years later when my name and face were much in the public prints a letter came to me from Lizzie. She had not forgotten that day of our youth. She was married and settled in a western city. I hope that life has led her into pleasant paths of peace and plenty.

I remember how brightly the sun was shining that summer morning when I set out to find my way in a rather cold, indifferent world. I set out across the fields for the railroad going south. If I held to that I could not lose my way. I wonder at the cheerful courage in my heart those days. Well, it was the heart of youth. The meadow birds cheered me with their songs.

For some miles I had followed the railroad track when I came upon a gang of section men. Their boss was a kindly Irishman of middle age. He greeted me pleasantly. I asked how far it was to Brandon. Then I observed that he and his helpers were looking at me with curiosity in their faces.

"Boy, why are ye walkin' this hot day?" the Irishman asked.

"To save money," I answered. "I'm looking for work. Do you want a man to help you?"

The Irishman laughed.

"Ah, sor, this work is no fer the likes o' you," he said. "Sure, it's hard an' dirty an' would put a bend in yer back. Ye look like ye'd be a lad o' education an' reefinement, sor."

I told him that I had a good home and the best of parents far out in New York State and that most of my life had been spent in school but that I was not too proud to turn my hand to any kind of honest labor.

"I'll tell ye what ye do," he said. "About a mile below on the left ye'll see a big stone house wid towers on it an' a high stone wall around the fields. It'll be the home o' Columbus Smith. Sure, he has riches an' riches an' a thousand acres o' land. Ye'll go up to the road an' come in at the front gate an' ring the door-bell an' ask for Mr. Smith. They'll never turn ye away as they would the likes o' me bekase ye have the look o' a gentleman's son. Tell him what ye've said to me an' Gawd be with ye."

I thanked him and went on my way. Is it any wonder that I have always kept in my heart a tender feeling for the Irish?

COMING UP THE ROAD

Soon I saw the mansion of the great man and went up to the road leading from Middlebury to West Salisbury, in at the front gate and through the graveled, curving road to the door. The grandeur of the place appalled me. I was afraid but I did not hesitate. A servant opened the door and showed me to the library. There I waited until Mr. Smith came in.

I have never seen a more picturesque figure of a man. He was stout, ruddy and of medium height. His hair was thick and snow-white, his eyes and eyebrows were as black as jet. His face was large and smooth shaved, his jaw firm. A thin, silken, white throat beard showed above his collar. He wore a brown velvet jacket. His trousers were of the same color. A waistcoat of figured silk covered the broad convexity of his breast and abdomen. He looked as calm and peaceful as a mountain in the sunlight. He wished to know what he could do for me. I told him where I came from and that I was looking for work.

Did I know any one in that part of the country? Now it happened that my father's cousin at that time was the most brilliant lawyer in Vermont.

Mr. Smith knew and admired the genius of the man whose name I had mentioned. He drew a silver snuff-box from his waistcoat pocket, took a pinch of its contents and sniffed thoughtfully.

"I will ask my wife to talk with you," he said as he retired from the room.

The lady entered. She was a tall keen-eyed woman, of about her husband's age, with white hair and a gentle face. She sat down with me and we had a talk together. Mrs. Smith was a woman of unusual judgment and penetration. In a few minutes she knew me as well as I knew myself. My familiarity with certain of the best books impressed her.

"Perhaps you could teach my children," she said. "The girl is nine, the boy eleven. If you don't mind I'll ask you to go a-fishing with them this afternoon. I hope that they will like you, and that you will like them."

They were a most attractive pair of children. I liked them, and they liked me. So it happened that I spent the summer with these good people in Shard Villa, which was the name of their home. I recall that, next morning, my first task was rather unusual. The old English gardener, a bachelor, who lived alone in a small house built for him among the shrubbery near the gate, had not come to breakfast. They could get no answer by rapping on his locked door. I was asked to try to crawl through a small cellar window and thus enter the house and see what had happened to the gardener. In a bedroom on the second floor of the little

COMING UP THE ROAD

cottage I found him lying helpless on the floor, stricken by a cerebral hemorrhage.

Shard Villa was built for large hospitality somewhat in the fashion, as I now know, of an English country estate with many tenant houses on its broad domain. The experience was good for me. The college folk from Middlebury, the governor and other distinguished people were entertained there. I spent most of my evenings in my room with books from the library. One day while I was riding with the master of Shard Villa I heard from his lips the strange romance on which his fortune was founded.

He had graduated from the law school of Middlebury in 1824. Soon he went to England and began to practise in the Court of Claims. His first case was that of the heirs of Frances Mary Shard against the Crown.

These were the romantic facts which he established. About the middle of the eighteenth century, one William Rutherford kept The Black Horse Tavern near Trenton, New Jersey. His pretty daughter, Frances Mary, waited on the tables. One day the young Lord Fortescue drove up from Philadelphia with his coach and four. He went to The Black Horse for dinner. Frances Mary served his food and drink. He fell in love with her. He tarried and The Black Horse Tavern became his

STRANGE ADVENTURES

favorite objective. On one of his visits he induced Frances Mary to elope with him. They were married. Lord Fortescue took her to his home in Ireland. The father of the young man, enraged by the marriage, banished his son by giving him an allowance to be continued only as long as he and his wife kept out of Ireland. The young couple lived for some years on the Continent. His Lordship was a heavy drinker. He died in Paris.

In a year or so Frances Mary married a wealthy Englishman of the name of William Shard who was visiting the French capital. She went with him to his estate in England. If I remember rightly the town was Paignton. There the daughter of the humble, New Jersey innkeeper enjoyed a grand life with some thirty servants in the great house. Cursed and cast out by her own people she was a lonely figure when left a widow. She died, at last, intestate, and her property went to the Crown.

After a legal fight which lasted more than a decade Smith recovered it with interest for ninety years for the descendants of William Rutherford. It was the first and the largest of many like successes in the Court of Claims. On this remarkable romance Shard Villa was founded.

Mr. and Mrs. Smith were people of eccentric tastes. An Italian artist had painted the walls and

ceilings of the mansion in flaming colors. Its interior was decorated in the fashion of a circus wagon. In baronial surroundings these good people practised the thrift of old New England. Hereditary impulse would have its way with them.

They had erected a great gloomy mausoleum on the grounds. They had a curious pride in it. Such an invitation to Death I have never seen, and Death was not slow to accept it. In their youth the children were both put away within its granite walls—the boy at sixteen, the girl a year or so after her marriage when she had become a famous beauty.

I saw much of Mr. and Mrs. Smith in the years that followed. I connected them with a beloved past. They welcomed me with joy. I was with them now and then in years shadowed with sorrow.

On one of my last visits to Shard Villa its master had lost his health and reason. At night I was awakened often by a curious animal roar from the lips of the stricken man—a weird and melancholy sound ringing through the great house in which I had heard the merry laughter of children. What I then heard was like the voice of a bitter resentment which had burned to ashes the heart and mind of him who cherished it. I can never forget the sound. The color of that night has served me well.

STRANGE ADVENTURES

Late in August I left Shard Villa. I was homesick and intended to go directly to my father's house. The slender sum given me for my services seemed inadequate. I would be returning with the empty hands of the Prodigal Son and not with the desired halo of success. I had met on the train a cheerful youth who was selling silver polish. He generously gave me the receipt for making it and glibly detailed his method of procedure. He said:

"I call for the lady of the house. I tell her that I can sell her something for a few cents which is as good as a hired girl. It cleans glassware, silverware, gold, brass and pewter, removes dirt from woodwork and makes the home bright and beautiful. That interests her. Then I say, 'If you've got any old pieces of tarnished silver I'll show you what this hired girl can do.' I get along best with jolly women who have curly hair and their sleeves rolled up. Them that sit around reading Shakespeare are no good."

He was a friendly and convincing talker.

"I think that you'd do splendid," he added in a moment. "You have a fine education an' can sling big words. You can easily make five dollars a day."

For a dollar he sold me the recipe and a stock of his goods—round white balls, made of whiting and ammonia and wrapped in tinted tissue-paper.

COMING UP THE ROAD

I needed only a small sponge and a piece of chamois skin to complete my outfit.

I took the boat at Burlington for Plattsburg. There in less than three days I sold out my stock, going from house to house. I had made a rather handsome profit and was much encouraged. I invested more than half my earnings in whiting and ammonia. I began mixing the ingredients in accordance, as I thought, with the formula, in the big wash-basin which was a part of the equipment of my hotel bedroom. Somehow it didn't come out right. The wash-basin was nearly filled with a recalcitrant sticky mass of snow-white mud. It was too wet. I spent two anxious days waiting for the mass to dry. Meanwhile, the chambermaid left a note on the wash-stand asking: "What is this stuff in your basin?"

The hotel bill had more than devoured the balance of my profits. For the first time I was out of courage. I feared that the hotel man would put me in jail if I told him that I couldn't pay the small sum I owed him. I knew not what to do. Scared and humiliated, I ran away from my trouble. It was an unmanly act, the thought of which has been like a coal of fire in the hand. Still, what is all this if it is not the truth? I packed everything of value in my bag and leaving my small trunk I set out afoot for home on the main

STRANGE ADVENTURES

road going west. Again my self-respect was leaving me.

A mile or so out of town a farmer overtook me and asked me to ride with him. I told him that I would like to get work long enough to give me the money to carry me home. His brother needed a man in the harvest field. I took the job and worked that afternoon on the dusty mow where the men tried to bury me as a kind of initiation. My head was aching but I kept the pitchway clear. After supper I had the job of going into the stable and unhitching and leading out to water a big, ill-tempered, horned bull with a ring in his nose. I did this task, dreaded by the others, knowing fairly well how to take care of myself.

At night my bed was so overrun with vermin that I got up and slept on the floor. Three days of this was all that I could stand. With my pay in my pocket I set out for a westward point on the railroad some sixteen miles away. It was a warm, bright, early September day. I walked until I was tired. Then in a field near the roadside I lay down to rest sheltered by tall grass. I fell asleep and did not awake until the sun was low. I arose and resumed my travel very hungry. About dusk I reached a little village in a rather wild country. It had a small inn kept by a Frenchman. I offered him a handsome coat, which Mr. Smith had given

COMING UP THE ROAD

me, for supper, lodging and breakfast. It was large value for my entertainment. He accepted it. I think that I never ate a meal with keener enjoyment than the supper he served to me.

The sun rose in a clear sky next morning. Well-fed and rested I set out for a point on the railroad from which my slender resources would be sufficient to carry me home. The day grew hot as I traveled. About eleven I came to the depot of a small town. Its master was a young, big-hearted Irishman of the name of Casey. I entered the waiting-room. He was sitting by the telegraph key in the office. I told him that I wished to send a telegram.

"Come in and sit down here at my desk and write it," he said in a voice that warmed my heart.

I went in and sat down and wrote a message to my mother and gave it to him.

"What beautiful penmanship!" he exclaimed. "I have never seen the like of it."

I thanked him and asked: "Would you mind letting me put it on the wire? It's some time since I have jerked lightning and I would like to try it."

"Are you a telegrapher?" he asked in astonishment.

"Yes," I answered. "But I do not take as readily as I send."

STRANGE ADVENTURES

He gave me the call and I snapped off the message at high speed and got my O. K.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

I told him the story of my ill luck and curious adventures. It amused him.

"I wish you'd start a writing school here," he said. "I'd give a good deal to be able to handle a pen as you do. I'll help you. First come to dinner with me. It's just twelve o'clock."

We went to dinner at the Twomblys' who kept a boarding-house about a quarter of a mile from the station. Mr. Twombly was a Frenchman who had a grocery store and a boarding-house noted for its neatness, cleanliness and excellent food. The best of his possessions were a kindly wife and two pretty, black-eyed daughters of about my own age. It was a rugged rocky village climbing up a hill crowned by a wooden Catholic Church, a school building and two or three stores. Some thirty houses were scattered here and there on hill and slope. They were occupied by kindly, thrifty, hard-working folk. A sawmill, a tannery and iron furnaces were near. The village was on the edge of wild country. Blackberries were abundant and the grateful odors of the forest were in the air. I spent the afternoon in my room making pen drawings and specimens of my script. Young Mr. Casey went around with me from house to house that

COMING UP THE ROAD

evening. I soon had a class of fifty students. I taught three evenings a week in a room of the school building. In a near village I had another class which occupied the remainder of the week.

The social part of this little enterprise I can never forget. Those good people took me to their hearts. The most real Christian help and hospitality which my boyhood knew came from them. In every house was a cottage organ and jolly young people to sing and play. *My Grandfather's Clock* was a general favorite, and pretty Anna Floyd sang it best. Many a Sunday night Will Casey and I went home late with a scattering crowd of boys and girls from the Widow Hanley's.

I set out for my own home at last with fifty dollars in my pocket. I felt rich and proud that day with all my troubles behind me as I thought. Only two of those dear people have I ever seen again, but each and all of them I remember with unfailing gratitude.

Well, as Mrs. McCormick used to say: "It has been a big wash, but, Gawd knows, with the jokes an' the dancin' I forgot the ache in me."

CHAPTER XI

BACK HOME AGAIN

IT WAS a joyful homecoming and yet there was in it a note of solemnity and a deep shadow. My brother Burton was failing. He had not long to live. In spite of that he was the most cheerful member of our household. No word of complaint or discouragement came from his lips. My mother embraced me, and we sat down together for a talk. I learned of the worries and anxieties and sore trials which had beset them in my absence.

In the days that followed I became a man—not much of a man, to be sure, but still a man. Most of the illusions of youth had passed. I knew something of the world I was living in. My opinion of it was no more favorable than its opinion of me. There were sundry facts in my small history which I thought it necessary to conceal. No other fact I knew was quite so unfortunate as this one. The truth is I was better than my own estimate. My heart was fairly clean. My conscience was at work. I had an exaggerated notion of the importance of my follies. But when a boy has acquired secrets which grieve and worry him he is sure to acquire

some skill in the art of prevarication. I became a somewhat able liar.

In a talk I once had with Thomas Nelson Page he said that all boys were, for a time, liars, and that the reading of Sir Walter Scott's novels had cured him of the habit. If boys are apt to be liars, for a time, it is, I think, because they cherish an illusion like the one I had. Fortunately, I had a mother who was not easily fooled.

My parents were in some measure prepared for the loss of the most brilliant, high-minded and capable son in the family on whom their hopes were largely founded, yet when at last the blow fell how it broke them! My own sorrow was great enough, but my pity for them was even greater. For the more or less remote future I was now their main dependence. I must not disappoint them. Arthur was in failing health, Loren had suffered an injury of his back in an accident and was trying desperately to continue his work with the aid of drugs to sustain him. We were in a rather bad way. The patent-right dream had developed into nightmare.

I had grown suddenly to a kind of manhood at seventeen. Yet what should I do? I had become very humble. There were my debts. Much I thought of them and often in the night. My parents wished me to go to school and later to college.

They would get along somehow, they said. What courage, what self-sacrifice was theirs!

It is easy to ridicule the drabness and rigid economies of Main Street, but beneath them was this beautiful spirit achieving its victories, some of which were to fill the world with wonder. It is literally true that half the students who walked the pavements of our Main Street ate the bread of sacrifice to get their learning.

I decided to do the thing which my parents wished me to do. I went to school. My evenings were wholly given to study and to reading good books aloud while my parents listened. Saturdays I posted the books of tradesmen and in that manner made a little money. It quickly left my hand in the needs—the pressing needs of the day of its arrival. We could never get a dollar ahead of them.

Late in the autumn my grandfather passed away, and we buried him in the family plot at Pierpont Center. There I saw again the pretty girl who had come to play croquet with me when I was a small boy—an incident which I had not forgotten. She was now a beautiful young miss of about my own age. I was thinking often of her in the days that followed. At Christmas a present and a letter came from her. We began a correspondence.

COMING UP THE ROAD

When the roads were settled in late spring I went up to visit her. Love's young dream began that day, for both of us, I think. I looked eagerly for her letters and answered them promptly.

The river was full of logs. Their odor filled the air. The great mill on the island near us was now running night and day. I was often awakened by the deep bass roar of the big revolving saw as it ripped its way, back and forth, through logs of spruce and pine as the boards fell beneath it. So the primeval forest floated down the river to the mills every spring and early summer to be turned into merchandise.

One day of that early summer I saw Doctor Gaines, the president of the college, sitting on the veranda of the Hodskin House. Often I had heard him and Doctor Fisher, president of the Theological School, as they preached or lectured in the Universalist Church. These were the great men of the town. Every one respected them. They were men of character, of a power and insight which even I had felt. I can never forget how Doctor Fisher's lecture on Tyndal's theory of light had fired my imagination. I suppose that the deep, vibrant, musical tones of the speaker—the like of which I have never heard save in those of the great Salvini—helped the process.

Timidly I went to Doctor Gaines who was sitting on the hotel veranda and said that I would

BACK HOME AGAIN

like to speak with him. He put aside his newspaper and invited me to take a chair at his side. I told him of my hope of being admitted to the college in the autumn. He asked about my preparation. I gave him the particulars. He advised me to take a special course of study at the college for a year and then try to go on with the Sophomore class. Any young man of good health and fair aptitude for study could by close application work off the conditions which would be put upon me. That little talk was the beginning of a definite plan of action.

I spent a good part of the summer working in the fields with a rougher, lower-minded gang of men than I had ever known. It was the only kind of thing that I could find to do. Often of a weekend my tender regard for the young lady took me to Pierpont in my best clothes. With a great joy in our hearts we walked in the woods and the blossoming fields and drove out on the lonely roads together. What a rainbow gleam is in those happy days as I look back at them! She, with her clear, star-bright eyes, the clover's red in her cheeks, and the pink and white and grace and odor of the apple-blossom in her shapely neck and arms, was to me a creature far above the sordid levels of the world I knew. She was not a girl. She was an ideal. I got the feeling that I must do something rather fine and big to be worthy of her.

There was a sturdy young giant studying law in Canton who was a student of Shakespeare. I knew and liked him. One day, when we were talking together, he quoted these lines:

“Were I hard-favour’d, foul, or wrinkled-old,
 Ill-nurtur’d, crooked, churlish, harsh in voice,
 O’erworn, despised, rheumatic, and cold,
 Thick-sighted, barren, lean, and lacking juice,
 Then mightst thou pause, for then I were not
 for thee;
 But having no defects, why dost abhor me?”

The artful, curious heaping up of adjectives and their climax in the passage delighted me.

“Where did you get it?” I asked.

“It is from Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis*,” he answered. “Have you never read Shakespeare?”

“No.”

“Well, you’ve got some fun ahead of you.”

I left him and went to Jake Jewett’s bookstore and spent seventy-five cents for a big, green, cloth-covered volume entitled, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*. The type was execrably fine, but my keen eyes were not dismayed by it. I think that no investment I have ever made has paid so well. The light of revelation came out of my new book. I was in a season of development when I could feel the rugged strength and simplicity of the phrasing, the dramatic power of the climaxes,

the subtle, insistent notes in the character building.

I began reading the tragedies aloud to my father and mother. *Julius Cæsar*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, filled our evenings and made us forget our troubles. Soon I became a somewhat expert reader of the text and a real student of the great dramatist. How easily my memory gained possession of the noblest passages!

Now, men do not go steadily forward in any direction. The way of progress is never quite in a straight line. There were days when the restless, reckless spirit of old was in me.

I remember a day when I had returned from some skylarking expedition, the nature of which I have forgotten, my mother sat down with me and asked where I had been. I lied to her. She asked me another question and still others. Soon she had convicted me on my own testimony. It is probable that from the first she had known the whole truth of the matter. Suddenly I had become like clay in the hands of the potter. Never have I felt such a sense of humiliation. It broke me down, all the more because of her calm and gentle manner and her easy, masterful command of the situation. I never tried to fool her again. To the best of my recollection this was about what she said to me:

“What is a man if his word can not be relied

upon? One's word must stand for the exact truth or it has no value. If it has no value how terribly it cheapens those other words in the name you bear. They cease to be respectable. People like to know the meaning of words. When they hear the words in your name they have a great curiosity to know what they mean. They will go to your conduct for a definition of them as you go to the dictionary when you find a word that is new to you.

"When one man asks another: 'What is the meaning of the words Addison Irving?' would you have him say: 'I have looked them up in the dictionary and I find this definition—a liar, a dishonest, ungrateful person, one who can not be trusted'? Or would you have him say: 'An honest boy, one who speaks the truth, a trustworthy person'?"

What could I say? To use a vivid, homely metaphor of that region: she had "nailed my hide to the barn-door." She had done it gently and lovingly. I wonder if an angry word from her would not have broken the spell. The truth is that something had come out of her spirit into mine which has had an unmistakable effect, I think, on my whole life. By this I do not mean that any great and sudden change had come over me. But I was in a new relation to a great source of help and

power. My mother and I had become friends in the deepest, fullest sense.

Mothers, who are, perhaps, not quite so masterful as she, are apt to occupy, in the imagination of their sons, a place of exaltation too ideal and remote for practical service. It would seem to be difficult for them to come down to the level of the boy and win his confidence in their wisdom, strength and insight.

My Uncle Charley had moved his library to our house. Many of its books occupied my leisure. One day among them I found a letter which he had written from Washington, where he spent his winters, to his son in Canton. In this letter he had written:

“Be sure to keep your credit good at home. What people think of you at home will be and must be the foundation of your standing in other places. If you are respected there you will be respected elsewhere. Your home town will be the information bureau to which those interested will turn for knowledge of you.”

The words impressed me deeply. I have not forgotten them. My credit in my home country was somewhat damaged. This letter added strength to my resolution to make it good.

The time was near for the opening of the college term, and I was ill at home. My feet and face

had suffered from ivy poison in the country meadows. They had been badly inflamed and swollen. The blisters were no sooner healed than a plague of boils came where they had been, mostly on my feet. A carbuncle on my back between my shoulders had begun to remind me of its presence. My pains had been generously distributed and were most acute. I was better when college opened; still, I was only a shadow of my former self.

I would not be defeated in my purpose. My father drove me to that colonial structure on the hill familiar to me since the days of my young boyhood. With crutches to sustain me and slippers on my feet I climbed the portico of what is now Richardson Hall and entered its door.

The halls were thronged with chattering young men and women of the under classes, some of whom I had known in the academy. Friendly words greeted me. On the verge of this new venture I was awed and rather silent. A bell rang and we filed into chapel. I was steered to a rear seat among the freshmen. Then the upper classmen entered—a dignified, sober-looking lot of young men and women—and took the front seats.

Last of all came the faculty—there were only six men in it—and sat down on the stage. Returning to their tasks at the beginning of the new college year, they looked very grave with one excep-

tion,—the brawny and athletic Walter Gunnison. His face was always cheerful and often smiling. It was one of the noblest faces I have seen. Those faces were all familiar to me save one—that of Bernhard J. Pink, a recent graduate of the University of Berlin, who had just come to the chair of modern languages, wherein French and German only were then taught. How sound-hearted, how rich in character and real scholarship and personality was this little band of overworked, underpaid, devoted men! Each of them seemed always to have an easy mastery of his subject. That college was a rather small affair. If my memory serves me well, there were less than sixty students. Yet if character and serious purposes are the main thing, as they now tell us, in a college training, I think that no institution was on a sounder footing. Indeed I think that we would have outweighed some that were large and famous.

Song-books were passed among us. A young lady played the piano while the students sang. Doctor Gaines read a brief passage of scripture and prayed. Then he addressed the student body, closing with good advice to the newcomers. This done he introduced Mr. Foster L. Backus, an old grad and a successful lawyer in Brooklyn, who would sing for us. Mr. Backus had an excellent tenor voice. He sang with much feeling a religious

ballad entitled, *When the Mists Have Rolled Away*. It was to me a new and misty atmosphere, and the title had a most appropriate sound. I remember that this was the substance of the promising envoy: "We shall see as we are seen, we shall know as we are known, when the mists have rolled away."

The chapel service ended. The mists began rolling as the ceremony of salting the freshmen started. The latter, some twenty in number, rushed from the room and down the hall and out on the campus followed by the yelling sophomores throwing salt at them or rubbing it on their faces. I was deeply interested in this proceeding although unable to take any part in it. I had elected to study French, German, freshman mathematics and Latin, and to take rhetoric with the junior class. It was a large contract. That first day we had short sessions, in which our work was cut out for us.

The students had been friendly. The college atmosphere was grateful to me. I went home filled with a deep and serious resolution to "draw the load or die in the traces," as they were wont to say in that land of good horsemen.

My mother had fitted up a room which was to be all my own. It contained a table for my books and writing, a lamp and a bed. There I was often at work until the small hours of the morning.

My wounds healed. I was strong for my tasks. I had a poor, ill-balanced preparation for them. In literature I would have been perhaps of average junior grade, or even better. In mathematics and history I was behind the freshman standard. I regret that I could not have had the help of my professors in mastering the text and problems to which I had to apply myself. The precise point where help is needed is in study. My friend, Hamilton Holt, has aptly expressed my view in saying:

“The thing of prime importance is for the student to learn what the Professor knows—not for the Professor to learn what the student knows. On the old plan the quizzing is mostly done by the Professor whereas, in the course of his study, the quizzing should be mostly done by the student.”

Consider for a moment the psychology of the classroom situation—an assembly of students facing the professor. The students are on the lookout for an opportunity to laugh. The professor is human. Often he is a man of wit and wide experience. He enjoys a laugh as well as any one. He loses no opportunity to increase his reputation for wit. He holds an immense advantage over the lads who sit before him. In the publicity of the classroom they are rightly afraid of him. They are wary in the matter of quizzing. They fear to

show their ignorance. They dread a possible opening for some smart and stinging lead. A sensitive lad whose query has raised a laugh will thereafter hold his peace. What the students get must come mostly from the books and the lectures. The special curiosities of each are rarely satisfied.

I am sure it would have been better for me if my class in a group could have studied with the professor, when we could have tried to learn what he knew—each having help to amend his own special ignorance or inaptitude—instead of going to recitations wherein the professor tried, with rather poor success, to learn what we knew.

It was a hard year for me with a number of special examinations. I succeeded in cleaning my slate of all conditions. The faculty was sympathetic. Rightly or wrongly it had decided that I was not hopeless material—that something could be made of me. I am sure that the professor of mathematics was lenient. Anyhow he let me by. I was admitted to the sophomore class. The first decisive battle of my life had been won. I was elated—not alone for my own sake. My father and mother were getting good reports of me from all sides. A new reason for living on with hope and good cheer had come to them. Men and women I had never known were giving me the glad hand.

CHAPTER XII

KEEPING IN THE MAIN ROAD AND ACQUIRING A TASTE FOR GOOD LITERATURE

As soon as the term ended I went up to see the young lady of whom I have written. We had a long ride together. I laid my plans before her. Three more years in college, then a course in law! Her face had a serious look. There would be at least five years of waiting. It was too long.

I had come to an obstacle no thought of which had entered my mind. It had not occurred to me that this beautiful ideal of mine would object to traveling with me on the long road toward the distant shining goal of my dreams. It had seemed so tied to my own happiness and that of all who were dear to me. Indeed, I had thought it the one thing needed to make me worthy of her. Yet now I saw the truth. Youth and beauty soon begin to fade. To a maiden at her best five years are many. I was deeply in love with her. What was I to do?

Now I am so constituted that when I have found my way and am convinced that my duty is to keep going I can not turn back. I can not turn

COMING UP THE ROAD

aside even though I walk with blistered feet and a sore heart. I am under a kind of compulsion. After all there is, I think, a crumb of truth in that old doctrine of predestination. Some ships are for the open sea and long voyages and rough weather. Some are not.

Just what the boy said to the girl I can not now undertake to tell. I do remember well the sense of chivalry that filled his words. What her heart inclined her to do, that she must do and with no feeling of obligation to me. As to myself, I would leave entirely in her hands my hope that she would decide to wait for me.

She was married within a year or so to a most engaging young lawyer almost ten years older than she. I was fond of her and a bit staggered. Youth has a way of repairing its injuries. Its work, its imagination and its friendships are like the healing hands of God.

I was acquiring a gift for concentration in which I forgot everything but the work I had to do. I became curiously indifferent to the charms of the fair young ladies whom I knew in college. I did not even learn how to dance and be merry with them. That graceful diversion was not for me. I was too poor. I had no spending money—absolutely none. No boy liked fun and beauty and cheerful company better than I did. This, however,

is the truth: I could have no part in the social functions which involved even a small expenditure.

A good purpose, honestly adhered to, becomes in no very long time an almost irresistible thing, in its neighborhood. I had become popular with the student body. They were pushing me forward in the debating society and elsewhere, often to places which I was poorly qualified to fill. At rhetoricals I had read a little essay which excited favorable comment. I began to feel a small under-current of suspicion as to whether it was all my own work. This passed for ever when at Tree Holiday—the chief feature of which was the planting of class trees on the campus with appropriate ceremonies—I captured the crowd with an account in blank verse of a desperate battle between my class and the freshmen. The latter had tried to enter the sacred precincts with plug hats on their heads. This disgrace we had prevented after a truly devastating and bloody encounter at the gates.

Late that autumn another thunderbolt fell upon our home. My oldest brother had returned to fight it out with the morphine habit which he had acquired in seeking to relieve the pain from his injuries. It was a brave and pathetic effort. He did not realize, nor did any of us, that this was a most serious undertaking. He was very dear to

me. I was the one to whom he looked mostly for help. I occupied the same bed with him through nights of suffering and horror. Convulsions came, and he literally died in my arms. That fearful, heart-breaking experience put its mark on me. If my face has a seriousness in repose, to which my disposition does not entitle me and of which the photographers complain, I think that I know how and when it came to me. For a time it was hard to carry on. My sleep was broken and afflicted.

Suddenly one of the most remarkable characters I have known came into my life. His name was George James Clarke. He had graduated in 'seventy-two, if I remember rightly. Only one other student had left the college with a like gift for the history, literature and languages of ancient Greece and Rome. The sheer love of the classic graces had caused him to continue his study of them. The *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* were as familiar to him as *David Copperfield* was to me. He had a face of singular ugliness with big, dark, near-sighted eyes. His head was abnormally large and long, his body abnormally small and short. Some affliction of his nervous system caused a slight but constant tremor in his head. The like of his prodigious vital energy I have never seen. No enterprise in scholarship was too great for him; no tax upon his memory too severe.

Years before he had set himself the task of learning every name and date of prime importance in ancient, medieval and modern history. He boasted, and I would say justly, that he had accomplished it. He learned of a new world to conquer—of a field of human achievement of which he knew nothing. It worried him. He had no talent for music. All tunes were alike to him. But his intelligence and energy were equal to any task. So he fell to and mastered the art of reading the most difficult music and acquired a technique on the piano which enabled him to present a fair interpretation of it. This was an achievement purely mechanical. If Chopin had deserted the piano for a time to learn how to play the banjo and make strawberry tarts, it would have been a proceeding no more strange and unfruitful than Clarke's effort to be a musician.

He had planned one dictionary to be developed from the roots of words, for Greek, Latin and the Romance languages and had begun work on it. Reams of paper were covered with his text. All this in spite of his defective vision.

It was not to be expected that he should have common sense. That, I think, is largely the product of keen observation. One whose eyes have never given him good service is not likely to have common sense. Clarke had not been able to note care-

COMING UP THE ROAD

fully the reactions of other people to his part in the drama of life. Therefore his sense was all uncommon. He had a store of knowledge like that of Samuel Johnson, and the simplicity of a child. He was, on that account, a most unusual and interesting human being.

He had heard of me and came one day to call when my mother and I were alone together. He was the editor of the *Commercial Advertiser*, a local Democratic weekly. In that stronghold of rank Republicanism his editorials created much amusement. They were written in the oracular, sonorous style of Lord Macaulay. His skill in phrasing, his flaming resentments, his rapier-like invectives would remind one of the *Letters of Junius* which he often quoted. In his view a Republican was either a rascal or an ignoramus. These fulminations gave no offense. People of taste and cultivation sought and read and quoted them with laughter, some few with approval. They kept that little newspaper going at a rather smart pace.

He was in a genial mood the day that he came to our house. I remember that when he was seated he took out his handkerchief, covered his long nose and blew it with unusual violence. I soon came to know that all his conversations were thus introduced. We spoke of events at the college. He told me that he had been a classmate of Martha Har-

daker whose brilliant essays in *The North American Review* were then widely quoted.

"What do you think to-day of our senior senator?" I asked, with a smile, recalling one of Clarke's recent editorials.

"Oh, as Junius said of Lord Granby, 'he has as clear a title to the infamy of his ancestors as he has to their estates.'"

My volume of Shakespeare lay on a table near me. He picked it up and held it close to his face.

"Shakespeare! Humph!" he exclaimed. "Are you reading it?"

"My mother and I have a lot of fun with it. There's not so much excitement in Canton, but in Shakespeare there's plenty of it."

Clarke was deeply interested and he said:

"I want you to read Von Schlegel's great book on the development of dramatic poetry. I'll bring it to you."

He tucked the fingers of both hands in his vest pockets, assumed a solemn look and for more than half an hour talked with a singular eloquence of the deep background of Shakespeare.

Clarke interested me. We became friends. He spent much of his leisure at our house. We read *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello* together and entered into a sort of contest in committing our favorite passages.

COMING UP THE ROAD

He mapped out a course of reading for me. I remember that it began with Macaulay's essays on Milton and Machiavelli. He criticized my literary efforts. I had never studied Greek. It was a sorrow to him. I must somehow get an understanding of the Greek spirit and literature. He brought to me the translations of the tragedies of Æschylus, Sophocles and Euripides and of the comedies of Aristophanes in Bohn's *Classical Library*. We read them together. It was for me an immense advantage to be able to get his comments on the text. He helped me to read it with understanding and appreciation of its power and vividness. Soon I got from the college library Bryant's translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. It was a joy and a revelation to me.

That year Clarke brought me a novel by George Eliot entitled *Felix Holt, the Radical*. It moved me deeply. I remember that I felt in myself a kind of kinship to the hero. I do not quite remember why. I wonder if the peculiar frankness of my spirit—the will to face the facts whatever they might be without fear—began to live and grow in me while I was reading that book.

I loved my work on the hill. I was getting the stride. The members of my class stood for one another through thick and thin. We boys had fought and bled together while the girls cheered

us on. The success of each was the concern of all. We helped one another over hard-going. I am sure that I profited more by this spirit than any member of the class. We had our meetings and our dinners. Generally the girls gave the dinners. Fortunately for me they rarely cost anything.

I dreamed now and then of having to drop out for some reason and of being left behind by my fellow students. It was a dreaded nightmare.

I had many friends on the hill, the dearest of whom was William L. Fitzgibbons. He was an athlete who could run a hundred yards in ten seconds. His speed was to him a source of revenue. I traveled about with him to see him run for purses which he always won. Our longest drive was out to the St. Lawrence and across to Winchester Springs where he won the championship of Canada. He was a young man of a high and noble spirit. I felt the compliment of his liking for me. He was not a pious lad. He never talked about religion. He was merry-hearted and liked a good time. But this remarkable trait I had observed in him: no profane or vulgar word ever came from his lips, nor had he an ill word to say of any one. I spoke of it when we were riding together.

He said: "I try to treat others as I would like them to treat me. I follow the general plan of Lord Chesterfield."

COMING UP THE ROAD

Every night when we slept in the same room his last act was to kneel by his bedside. For some reason I would have been ashamed to do it. I would find it difficult to analyze my aversion to that kind of worship. I prayed, but secretly and never on my knees. An attitude of self-abasement was, I thought, undignified in a man of my personal importance. I would have said that it was unreasonable in God to expect so much of me. I had read the smart sayings of Robert G. Ingersoll, and, while they had not turned me to his way of thinking, they had lessened my respect for the Church.

Somehow this act of his increased my respect for William L. Fitzgibbons. I knew not why. Whatever the Lord might think of it there was a certain comeliness in the strong lad's token of humble submission to a will above his own and mostly beyond his understanding. No doubt I felt this.

The friendly association of Protestant and Catholic youth in that institution had a fine and wholesome effect. They worked together on a footing of mutual respect with never a thought, I am sure, of religious differences. Scholarship, personality and character were the only considerations that prevailed in our friendships or our politics.

That winter I was chosen to represent the college in the annual debate between the two departments of our little university. I tried to show my appreciation of the honor by careful preparation. I failed to satisfy myself in the matter although if I remember rightly we won. The feud between our class and the freshmen was then in its worst stage. I was in the midst of my impassioned address to the judges when a small iron stove, from three flights above came hurtling down the well of the stairway in the hall outside the filled chapel where I stood and buried itself in the flooring. The crash was so tremendous that the building shook. It was a wonder that I was able to hold my self-possession and my audience. It was a critical moment.

I remember saying: "Gentlemen, this debate can not be won by that kind of argument," and went on with my address. It was a fortunate remark. It reassured the audience. Knowing that it was just a bit of college deviltry all kept their seats, save two or three young men who ran out to see what had happened, returning shortly.

The way I had taken this plan to undo me was the only part of my effort which created an impression. It was a crude exhibit of my talents, but some of my friends thought it promising. I had learned much in doing it. The college wits got after me and I was lampooned in a poem at

COMING UP THE ROAD

Tree Holiday. Two lines of it I have not forgotten:

“He flings his hands about at random
De gustibus non est disputandum.”

“Don’t let that worry you,” Clarke said to me. “No man is ever shot at who isn’t worth shooting. Nobody ever shoots at a fawn, you know.”

I got no comfort from this flattery, but in principle I think that he was right. It was all good for me. “My boards had not been trimmed and planed,” as they were wont to put it in the north country. After all a man must educate himself. That I set out to do. Especially I studied the art of expressing myself simply and strongly and with the restraint that becomes a gentleman.

I had never been able to give time to the long and arduous training needed for success in athletic contests. I had a special interest in boxing and gave an hour or so a day to the study and practise of the manly art with the college boxing-gloves. At our Field Day, in the late spring, I had a desperate three-round set-to in a roped arena with a sturdy young man taller and heavier than I. In the second round I got my nose broken although at the time I did not know that the injury was so serious. Even well-padded gloves on the hands of strong and speedy young fellows can do considerable damage. My return sent my opponent nearly through

the ropes. It turned out to be one of the most exciting contests of that Field Day. It was strong stuff and a bit bloody, but all in the best feeling. It was a close contest, according to the referee and witnesses, but the decision went against me and I think rightly.

That summer I got work on one of the local papers at a small salary. It kept me busy about three days a week summarizing news from the New York papers and those of our county and the chronicling of "small beer." With some latitude and intelligent direction I could have given better service, but my boss didn't know how to use me, nor did I know how to use myself. It was this kind of local news that kept me busy.

"Josiah Smith called at our office to-day and paid a year's subscription in advance. Josiah is a genial, whole-hearted fellow."

In our leisure Clarke and I began reading George Eliot together. My father's work buying cattle kept him out on the country roads most of the time. My mother was away from home a good part of the summer nursing my Aunt Eliza who was very ill. It was a work of love and sacrifice for a dear friend. My younger brother had gone out on a farm for the summer. I was alone

cooking my own food and making my own bed and keeping the house in order.

Clarke and I would sit in the shade of the great maples in front of our door those delightful days and read aloud to each other, stopping now and then to laugh at the author's wit or to discuss a fine passage. We first read *Daniel Deronda*—a rather long tale, then *Adam Bede* and *The Mill on the Floss*. We stopped only when hunger came to us. Then we would go to the kitchen and boil some eggs and make toast and coffee. We read also a volume of Macaulay's essays. When weary of reading we would tramp off on the country roads and sit down in some shady grove to rest and talk. Clarke's conversation was always interesting but often too learned for my comprehension. Still he loved to have me quiz him and I got much out of it. The Renaissance was his favorite theme.

I had not forgotten the beauty of the deep woods. Late in August I induced Clarke to go with me to Tuley Pond where I had camped one night when years before I went a-suckering with my brothers. So with loaded packs we journeyed into the forest and made a camp on the pond. The experiment was a failure. It was a lonely place. There were many mosquitoes. Clarke's learned talks were interrupted by swats and oaths. It was no place for pure and undefiled English.

The beauty of the mosses, vines, flowers and thickets was not within the scope of his vision. The scope of his appetite and of my own had increased beyond our expectations. It was not satisfied with cheese and crackers and red herring and dried meat. The nights were rather cold and black and frightful. The second morning Clarke arose cold and shivering. His face was swollen by the torturing bites of insects.

“My God!” he exclaimed. “The human mind has never invented a hell so unique, with such an infinite variety of torment to offer. Here are freezing cold, burning heat, hunger, loneliness, midnight perils, a sense of lost happiness and self-respect mingled with never-ending pain. While a dank chill settles on you a thousand agents of this perfect hell are bringing its fire in their mouths and shooting it into your body. You shiver, you burn, you curse, you contemplate the ruins of your soul. Then Sorrow and Remorse join your tormentors. Talk about huge affliction and dismay; I tell you, boy, I’ve found it and I’ve had enough of it. I’m going home.”

It was Clarke at his best. I lay on the balsam boughs roaring with laughter. He walked up and down in front of our lean-to, a serious look on his face as he emptied his full heart. If the wilderness had been the Republican party, he could not have been more eloquent.

COMING UP THE ROAD

"I have lost my respect for Milton as a hell-finder," he went on. "His torment lacks snap and vigor. He needed a trip with you to Tuley Pond. It would have put new strings on his harp."

Striding up and down to warm himself Clarke chanted the well-known passage:

"He views
The dismal situation waste and wild.
A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed; yet from those
 flames
No light; but rather darkness visible
Served only to discover sights of woe,
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
And rest can never dwell.

I got up and built a fire. The heat of it calmed him. A luncheon of cheese, crackers, dried beef and herring increased his resignation. I packed our blankets, and we set out for the clearing.

The sun shone warm, the day was still. Above the green aisle in which we traveled I caught glimpses of the blue sky. As he warmed up on our journey down the long, forest-covered hills Clarke grew genial. I had not felt the discomforts of our camp life as keenly as he had. I loved the woods. His eyes could not see their beauty. With keen eyes one may defend himself from much of their insect persecution. His ears found no

delight in the wild voices that appealed to me—the waterfall, the bird songs, the calls of flying fowl, the barking of foxes at night, the thunder of falling trees. He began to tell me the history of the art of poetry. It had begun with the description of great deeds which was the poetry of narration. Then naturally came the lyric gift in the poetry of celebration and reflection of thought and sentiment. Later the two types were joined in dramatic poetry. To illustrate his point he reviewed the history of Greek literature.

There were some ten miles of this learned talk which brought us to the edge of the clearing around Clifton.

“It would be a good subject for your Junior Ex Oration in June,” he declared. “You should at once begin a course of reading in preparation for it. Six months is none too much if you are going to do a good thing. I hope that you will never be content with just doing a job fairly well.”

I think that this advice was of great value to me. It was the beginning of a habit of studious, careful preparation for all my literary efforts.

We reached Gordon’s delightful log inn just before dinner. How pleasant were its comforts, its cleanliness, its hospitable atmosphere after the rude camp at Tuley Pond. The falls roared out a welcome to me. Gordon gave us a friendly greeting.

The house was nearly filled with guests. Among them was one of the most beautiful young ladies I had seen. I hurried to a room and bathed and made myself as presentable as I could.

We had a dinner the like of which I have never eaten. In justice to all good cooks I ought to add that I have never had an appetite the like of the one which I brought to Gordon's table. We had brook trout, freshly caught and fried whole in salt-pork fat, baked venison called "lamb" at that time of the year, new string beans, raspberries and cream and blueberry pie. This was the kind of food that Gordon served at a dollar and a half a day. It gave us a new outlook on life.

I got acquainted with the fair young lady, who was from Syracuse, and we took a walk together to the head of the falls. What wondering innocent eyes and what a manner that pretty girl had! She was the type of girl—in shape and look and manner—that appeals to men. She had a way with them—a snaring, indefinable charm. She was the type that has launched ships and put armies on the march. She was modest and innocent but also sophisticated and gently masterful. I jumped into poetry. I had done that once before after meeting Mount Mansfield. This small willowy maiden had something in her bigger than Mount Mansfield. I tried to tell about it in a poem entitled

The Song of the Falls. Since my adventure in Middlebury any piece of verse of indifferent quality was in my view a "Colonel poem." My new effort was undoubtedly a "Colonel poem." Still, for a boy it was a fairly creditable performance. The girl was, I thought, impressed by it.

I met her stepmother, a strong-built, valiant dame of forty, with a disagreeable habit of winking one eye while talking to me. She was a female Mr. Tupman with a disposition too romantic.

I left the place with a burning thought of the young lady in my mind. She wrote to me when she had returned to her home and I wrote to her. The fall term began. Work is the best remedy for all the erraticisms of the young. I got into the stride of the class. My ardor cooled. The little adventure at Clifton began to fade out of my memory. My intellect had come to an opinion in the matter and was speaking out. No doubt the girl was just playing with me as she played with others when she wished to be amused. Anyhow I would be a fool and worse than a fool to be turned from my purpose by a pretty face and a fascinating manner. What a figure of a man I would be—false to my friends and my purpose! The latter loomed large as the term proceeded. I had safely passed another peril of the young—the temptation to wander from the main road.

CHAPTER XIII

I BEGIN A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

MANY of the young men of the north country had grown weary of hearing political orators "wave the bloody shirt." These orators had been constantly fanning the dying embers of the old fire of prejudice. I had heard our senior senator, Roscoe Conkling,—a magnificent figure of a man with his famous Hyperion lock,—address a great crowd of our voters. In a deep tragic voice he spoke of the men "who draped this land in mourning and who deluged it in blood." I and many like me had reacted against the bitter prejudice of our fathers. We thought that the orators who sought to keep it alive were doing an ill service to our common country.

The idea came to me and to others that the extension of a leading college fraternity of the South into northern territory would have wholesome results. It would bring many clean-hearted boys of both sections into friendly relationship bound by an oath of brotherhood. I chose the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity. It was a successful,

A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

firmly established and influential frat with bishops and leading statesmen on its rolls. The late Walter H. Page, then a journalist in New York, was one of its members.

I organized a little band of my student friends and got a charter. Our budget of expenses for the first year was carefully made up. I circulated a subscription paper among the faculties, trustees and leading citizens. I raised more than enough to cover all preliminary expenses. The college promised us a room without rent for the first year.

The chapter was founded. We needed furniture and to get it resorted to a fortunate speculation. I engaged the Madison Square Theater Company who were then playing *Hazel Kirke* in Montreal to stop at Canton on their way to New York and present the famous play. They required a large guaranty for a village of the size of ours to pay. We engaged them, however, and sold the best part of the main floor at prices unheard of in that community. I went out with a bill poster and put our announcements on boards and barns and blacksmith shops. The local papers had never carried such a display of advertising as we gave them. The house was packed. A hundred chairs were placed here and there. Many people stood in the doorways and gallery sides. The performance with its caste of first-class metropolitan players was an

inspiration. The north country had never seen the like of it. Indeed I think that it has never since seen the like of it. If I remember rightly our share of the receipts was one hundred ninety-one dollars. With this sum we bought the furniture we needed for our chapter room. It was a creditable enterprise. We had introduced real art to the county and the county had shown its appreciation.

So Alpha Omicron of Alpha Tau Omega began its life. It has grown until it is now one of the most influential chapters in its great fraternity of collegians with a big chapter house and grounds exceeding fifty thousand dollars in value. It was, I think, a pioneer in the enterprise of bringing college students of the North and South into friendly association. Chapters of Alpha Tau Omega are now in almost every college of the North. Those at Cornell and the University of Vermont were established by our chapter at Canton.

I began my reading for the junior ex oration effort. Most of my leisure through the winter was given to it. I was elected president of the college literary society the important sessions of which were then well attended. Often the chapel was packed by students, faculty and townspeople. Again I was chosen to lead the college team in the interdepartment debate. I consulted different members of the faculty as to the reading to be

done in preparing for this task. They gave me lists of books and of articles in the leading reviews touching all sides of the theme.

I framed my argument and prepared myself with great care to defend it. I considered the probable strategy of the opposition and every likely shift in it. When the night came I was ready and confident. I knew thoroughly all that could be said for and against the proposition. We won a notable victory. A distinguished lawyer, a supreme court judge and a local statesman decided the contest. Their compliments and the enthusiasm of the student body paid us for all the hard work we had done. At last I had accomplished something that seemed to be worth while. Naturally I was a bit too well pleased with myself.

Next day I met President Gaines on the street. The president was little given to compliments. He was not the well-dressed, genial mixer, the winsome conversationalist that men in like places are apt to be these days. He was grave, silent, a great teacher, a plain man so much occupied by his tasks that often he would pass his friends without greeting them. Generally he wore a flannel shirt.

He stopped me and gave me his hand.

"I congratulate you," he said. "It's a good thing for a lawyer to know his case when he goes into court with it. You knew your case."

That is all that he said. In this life of mine I have had no compliment more welcome.

My junior ex effort before a large crowd in the new town hall was, I would say, the best thing I had yet done in college. I had begun the writing with a mastery of my theme as complete as I could make it. I wrote and rewrote the essay with a keen enjoyment of the task. The study of Shakespeare had helped my style. It was simpler, more direct, less stilted. I had begun to feel the power in the short, strong, lively, vivid words which had so well served the masters of the Elizabethan time. I had discovered that those old English "pony phrases" could haul a heavy load and were more graceful in lighter work. Always I had been searching the dictionary for large, showy and sonorous words. I had sought a resounding diction. I had not wholly recovered but was getting better and was able now to be my own physician.

My mother and I were mostly alone in the house together those days. Every morning her singing awoke me. She was happy and I have rarely known happier days myself, feeling as I did the promise of better ones. The year had been filled with successes. I think that every one recognized at least the sincerity of my work and purpose. My friends were many. I had established a respectable credit at home.

We were poor. Often we were in hard-going. But we were now broken to that kind of thing. I thought much of my debts and got a degree of comfort from the knowledge that in a year or so I could begin paying them—perhaps even in the summer now at hand. My younger brother had been in school. He was a bright boy but he had no love of study or of books. I think that my mother was much worried about him but she never let me know of it. I had been utterly absorbed by my growing tasks and duties on the hill. I had not been able to give him much of myself. He went out on a farm for the summer. Clarke had gone to *Gouverneur* to edit its leading newspaper. I went to work on the *Commercial Advertiser*. I even went to neighboring towns and wrote of their leading enterprises and solicited advertising and subscriptions.

That summer another trouble came upon us. Arthur, now my only older brother, came home to die of consumption, as it was then called. I returned and helped his faithful wife in the nursing. His life ended one midnight while I sat by his chair. I had a most cheerful spirit, but the truth is that living had become for me a rather solemn business. Another summer passed and I could spare not a penny for my debts. Still I thought not of myself in the matter but only of

my parents. I had become the very corner-stone of all their hopes and yet I had nothing but debts and prospects.

Professor Stowell returned to Canton in mid-summer. He was that stern Scot who was principal of the academy when my town schooling began. I had grown very slim and thin. My figure was not as erect as it had been. I think that my sorrows had bent my head a little. The anxious toil of three years, beginning as it had with a serious handicap, had told upon me.

The keen-eyed Scot surveyed me from head to foot. "Boy, let's go and take a ride together," he proposed.

We drove up the familiar stairway of the hills to Clifton. I had lately received a letter from the young lady in Syracuse. The beautiful girl was again at Clifton with her father. She had given the little forest village a romantic atmosphere. I imagined that she had not the charm of old. It would have been impossible for her to retain it. We were both a year farther on. Those unrivaled graces—had they been in part my own gift to her?

There was no denying her beauty. I felt the power of it. But this year she could have launched no more than five hundred ships.

On our way home my companion said to me:

"My young friend, I do not like the look of you.

I am worried about it. You must go to work and develop your chest. Fethers could give you good advice on that point. Our best source of vitality is in the air we breathe and you must get your share of it."

Ogden H. Fethers had been in town for more than two years studying law in the office of Sawyer and Russell—a firm of state-wide fame. He had been a successful public reader. He was an erect and handsome man of an impressive personality. I went to his house and told him of my need of some program of physical culture. This genial and kindly gentleman gave me advice of inestimable value. It put me in the way to perfect health.

He went to his desk and set down a course of arduous work for me, to wit:

"Fill the lungs as full as possible and while they are inflated tap the chest lightly with the tips of the fingers. Then exhale slowly. Do this for five minutes.

"Fill and empty the lungs as completely as possible about twelve times to the minute for five minutes.

"Fill and empty lungs as rapidly as you can for three minutes.

"Do all this twice a day. Keep the figure erect in walking."

This was a strenuous program, but I had the will and strength to do it. For a number of years

I continued this arduous exercise in breathing, charging my blood with oxygen night and morning. The most remarkable results followed. My chest expanded. My health improved. The muscles of my diaphragm and abdomen became so firm that I could take a severe blow in the solar plexus without minding it. Before I was thirty I had the chest measurement of the great athletes and unusually broad and powerful shoulders. My voice became strong, deep and resonant. It was, as my friends were wont to say, one of my best assets.

So I passed a peril of my young manhood: that of flickering out as other members of my family had done.

My senior year was rather fleet-footed. For months I read and wrought, getting ready for my oration. I wrote an essay for the *Gridiron*—our college annual. For the senior class concert we engaged the Swedish Ladies' Quartette of New York and the Temple Quartet of Boston. We believed in breaking records. Since that day no such an array of musical talent has ever honored our commencement rostrum, and we made it pay.

The day of our graduation arrived—a beautiful June day. My little thesis, revised and considerably improved, I think, by the wise Doctor Gaines, had been carefully committed to memory and rehearsed many times. My memory has been ever

a faithful servant to me. It had been well trained for years and I would entertain no distrust of it. I went on the platform without a manuscript or a prompter to help me in case of trouble. My theory was that if one looked for trouble he was apt to find it. How often I have seen a student ruin half his effectiveness by halting for a prompter's help or by drawing a manuscript from his pocket and seeking to determine the latitude and longitude of his last sentence. My memory was so well trained that I trusted it with absolute confidence. When later I became a reporter I rarely took notes. I could even rely upon it for dates and names.

As usual the big hall was filled. Many sympathetic faces were looking up at me and among them, those of my father and mother. The only danger point for me lay in that moment. A surge of emotion swept over me and passed unobserved by the crowd. Then I thought only of the changing phases of my theme sweeping toward their climax. It was, I think, a creditable effort for a college lad. Indeed the hard work had paid. It was not a conventional student oration. There was no mistaking the reaction it produced. When I left the platform cards came up to me from distinguished strangers, and my classmates and others had good words for me. I have no vanity in this

COMING UP THE ROAD

little matter. I mention it only because of its influence on my career.

I had intended to be a lawyer. Many good people had encouraged me to think that I could succeed in the law. Now my best friends were advising me to try newspaper work in New York as a preparation for a literary career.

My college course had ended. What was I to do? Money was my great need. I must have money with which to pay my debts and help my father in his problems. For the first year or two teaching promised to yield the largest returns. Professor Pink, of the chair of modern languages, recommended me to the Clinton Liberal Institute which was seeking an instructor in French and German. The pay would be six hundred dollars a year and board. Stowell had been teaching two years in South America where the pay was large. I was eager to see the great southern continent and its people. Clarke had returned to Canton. He had been talking with Stowell. His mind was full of the South American idea.

"Let's you and I register with Schermerhorn of New York for a job in South America and get ready to sail in August," he proposed.

Schermerhorn was then the best known agent for teachers.

"We would have to know Spanish," I suggested.

"That's easy," said the dauntless Clarke. "It is rooted in the ancient Latin with which you and I are tolerably familiar. We should learn the grammar in two weeks and be able to go to reading. In a month we shall have a serviceable vocabulary."

In a week he returned with the best Spanish grammar and dictionary and *Don Quixote* in the text of Cervantes.

We fell to and did actually get through the Spanish grammar in two weeks so that we were quite familiar with its simple rules, declensions and conjugations. Of course it was cramming, and the fruit of it is rather perishable. We read a number of books of *Don Quixote* with astonishing ease as one may who is even fairly well grounded in Latin. Our vocabulary grew and every day we had an hour or so of practise in Spanish conversation.

The clients of Mr. Schermerhorn would not engage their teachers without interviews. So we planned to go to New York early in August.

Worth Chamberlin, a successful local lawyer who had served our county well in the legislature at Albany, had kindly offered to loan me a hundred dollars with which to begin my career.

While we were waiting those summer days for the time of our departure, Clarke brought to me

a Watertown paper containing a vivid sketch of a most singular and romantic figure. For years he had haunted the inns and highways of the north country. He was a great master of the violin. Musicians like Gilmore of Gilmore's famous band, and Thomas Ryan of the Mendelssohn Quintette of Boston, who had heard him play, said that he was one of the few great masters. He played the noblest music. But he was a half demented, homeless wanderer and a mystery. Nobody knew whence he came or where or how his astonishing gift had been acquired. He was called Nick Goodall.

His death had occurred recently in the almshouse of Jefferson County. The leading citizens of Watertown had given him a decent burial and put a respectable memorial stone upon his grave. The sketch, which had rare literary quality was written by some minister who had had curious adventures with the strange musician.

He wandered about with his violin, which is now in my possession, stopping when and where he would—it might be in the shade of a tree by the roadside—to play. The innkeepers welcomed him. The news of his coming would spread and soon half the village would be crowding the hotel office and sitting-rooms to hear his playing. It was a piece of good fortune to be discussed and remembered as long as they lived. The poor fellow would

sit in silence with his violin at his side, the crowd waiting. He played not at any one's request but only when his spirit moved him to play. Then he seemed to search in pleasant paths of sound until he found the magic key that unlocked his prison cell. It would be perhaps some noble, shining phrase of music. There was magic in his bow! The half-hid soul of him went out on wings of song soaring, circling, towering, dipping, like a bird at play, in the sunlit heavens. What joy was in his face! His flight would sometimes last for hours until he had grown weary—often, indeed, until the night was half gone and all the unblest common souls in his audience had gone home to rest.

Now and then he would pause for a profane and rapturous outburst of self-approval or of appreciation of the music he had played. Hot, seething, shocking, oaths would pour out of his lips. It mattered not who was present. His passion always expressed itself either on the violin or in coarse and violent objurgations. It was a kind of rage. Then the ministers, the deacons, and their devoted followers would withdraw. As they did so what a rustling of the skirts of the pious ladies! Only real music lovers could stand this weeding out process by which Nick Goodall selected those who were to hear the last and best expression of his genius.

It would be perhaps the concerto of Paganini. The great concertos from that of Paganini down through the list of inspired masterpieces came off his strings.

He was utterly unmanageable. Many had tried to commercialize his genius. Their efforts had ended in failure. He would not, perhaps he could not, control his hours of inspiration. He would begin only when he was ready and that might be long after the promised hour. He would curse when he felt in the mood for it and stop only when he was inclined to do so. He loved his art. He had no friend. All men were alike to him. He was just a homeless, wandering minstrel like those of the olden time.

So just as I was leaving the land of my birth I learned of this strange, mysterious character whom I had never seen. He served to give the beautiful valley reaching southward from the St. Lawrence to the deep forest and the mountain foot-hills, a final touch of romance.

Not until I wrote *Eben Holden*, wherein I spoke of this inspired minstrel of the north country, did I learn of his background. Not less than a hundred letters came to me from those more or less familiar with his history. There were people in Boston, Salem and Elmira, New York, in and about which cities he had found friendly hospitality and appre-

ciation, who were able in part to clear up the mystery that veiled the half-demented master.

It was, if I remember rightly, the distinguished musician Thomas Ryan who sent me this outline of his history. He was the son of a talented violinist who was the leader of the orchestra at Ford's Theater in Washington through the latter years of Lincoln's administration. This man was on duty there the night that Lincoln was shot. His son, whose name was probably Nicholas, developed when very young an astonishing mastery of the violin. When little more than a child he made a successful tour of the continent as an infant prodigy with a technique like that of the great masters. His father was a hard avaricious man. The letter charged him with cruelty. He had found a gold mine in his possession. He overworked it and broke the lad down.

A high-mettled youngster loving the magic tones that he could produce, he needed restraint instead of urging. In his youth he became a nervous wreck. The golden bowl was broken at the cistern. It could not be repaired. In time he became a homeless wanderer until his death in the almshouse of Jefferson County. He left only his violin. It was appraised by Professor Schulte of Syracuse University. The leading citizens organized a raffle for its possession which would yield enough to pay

funeral expenses and erect on the grave a modest memorial. The violin was bought by my friend, Charles D. Bingham, then mayor of the city of Watertown, who presented it to me.

So this is the background that I left behind me when Clarke and I set out to seek our fortunes in the "wide, wide world." There was a detail in it which impressed me deeply—a detail which, like the flag of one's country, symbolized the whole. It was the waving of a handkerchief as I rode away. I could never be a traitor to that flag. I had letters in my pocket from every member of the faculty. They commended me. Through the four years they had taken a kindly and fatherly interest in me, bearing with my crudeness and freely giving me their counsel when I had sought it. What a group of sane, sound-minded, masterful, incorruptible gentlemen they were!

First among them in my affection was the kindly and beloved Bernhard J. Pink—perhaps because he had taken a special interest in me. Yet, the smiling, handsome, friendly Walter B. Gunnison had on the whole, I think, the most striking personality that I knew on the hill. As the head of Erasmus Hall High School in Brooklyn he became one of the most distinguished masters in America.

The rugged, kindly, venerable President Gaines had a personality more remarkable than any of

his associates. To the student he was a very worthy and approved good master. Every one dreaded his reproof. The younger students held him in awe, the older ones regarded him with an affectionate veneration which through all their lives they were to try in one way or another to express.

There was a professor on the faculty of a remarkable vein of humor. Often it had embarrassed us in the classroom, but we were fond of the man—Professor Squires who taught the mathematics. How deeply I was indebted to his friendly help and counsel I should find it difficult to tell. If I were to try to name the one big thing in the little college I would say it was *personality*. It is the gift of the great leader and teacher. If the small colleges have sent out a majority of those who have achieved fame and high fortune it was, I think, because their students were in close contact with men of real character who had a fatherly interest in their welfare. I am convinced that the personality of Christ was a thing far greater than His words.

We must not forget that the spirit of a student is considerably more important than his scholarship. His learning is apt to fade away, but I have observed that his spirit is almost sure to stay by him.

Now I remember a brilliant lad who was prob-

ably the best student in the college. He was a big, handsome youth. Everything was in his favor. Somehow he did not get the spirit of the place. In his conceit he felt above it. He was a bit cynical. There were certain successful men in the town who gambled and who now and then were lost even to themselves.

The reckless part of the village had its able and seductive champion. He is in every country village. I will call him Bill. Now our Bill was a brilliant young man of a good family. He had been to New York and Poughkeepsie where he had taken a course in the Commercial College. He had returned to Canton with a profound contempt for its littleness and crudeness. Its college was to him a joke. He had some wit. He was too good for the town and too good for the vulgar thing we call work. His life was one of elegant leisure. His mouth was filled with tobacco and merry jests and sonorous oaths. He was too often in the bar and billiard-rooms.

The brilliant young student of whom I have spoken was a follower of the captivating Bill. Of what use to him were his scholarship and his unusual comeliness of person. His spirit was unsound. The delightful lad became a poker sharp. Long years ago he and Bill sank out of sight in the maelstrom of this great city, friendless and discredited.

I have been frank in expressing my opinion of myself now and then as I came along. It has not on the whole been favorable. I think that my spirit was fairly right when I set out on my great adventure in the world. It was callow and very human. It had much to learn. It had not yet the strength that comes of resistance, the self-discipline that is the best part of the stress of living.

We rode southward on a hot and dusty day. Clarke left me at Rome to see a friend there. I went on to Syracuse and spent a lonely weekend looking at the salt-works and going out on Sunday to its big lake with a great crowd to see the performance of the famous swimmer—Paul Boynton. I did not know that there were so many Germans in the world as were gathered on that lake shore. They were having a merry time with their talk and beer and sausages. Germans can always have a good time by just looking at each other over a foaming mug and laughing and saying "*Gesundheit!*" Has this merry, affectionate good fellowship helped to make them a great people whose power has shaken the world?

I envied them their happiness. A more wearisome day of blistering heat and poor entertainment I have never known. It did not interest me to see Boynton splashing around and consuming beer and sandwiches on the lake surface in a rubber suit.

COMING UP THE ROAD

Next morning I went to Auburn to visit my sister's husband. The beautiful homes and gardens of the city—especially that of William H. Seward who was Lincoln's secretary of state—impressed me. Then there was the great prison whose superintendent was related to my family. It gave me sundry items of color which were to be useful in my later life.

I went on to Utica where I met Clarke. We took a train to Albany. There, to save money, we decided to proceed on the night boat to New York City. We carried our heavy bags to a cheap restaurant and spent twenty-five cents each for a frugal repast, meanwhile keeping a close watch on our possessions for fear of thieves. We had a deep but not a singular distrust of these teeming centers of population.

With a rather bad impression of the food of Albany, we labored onward to the boat-landing and went aboard. We knew nothing of steam-boat travel. We learned that people spent the night in staterooms and that we could get such a room with beds in it for two dollars. We were weary and decided that we must indulge in this extravagance. After long delay a steward showed us to our room. It was a small, inside room that opened off the dining saloon. It had two narrow beds one above the other. The springs were covered

with naked mattresses. We supposed that we had all the bedding we were entitled to. We had no light save a dim sift that came through the shuttered door from the gas-lit saloon.

We lay down without undressing, covering ourselves with our coats. The dinner service began outside our door. The rattle of dishes and the buzz of conversation murdered sleep. It continued far into the night. When the last diner had been served and stillness came, we slept.

We were awakened by innumerable steam whistles. They were far and near and of many keys and degrees of loudness. We knew that we were in the North River. We arose shivering for the night had been chilly. Clarke had lain down on a sheet of sticky fly-paper now glued to the seat of his trousers. I got the first laugh that I had had since leaving home. While he indulged in a fretful, staccato-like profanity, I peeled off the gummed sheet of paper.

"Clarke, you look like a one-cent postage stamp," I said. "Don't sit down or you will not be able to get up again."

While he was redressing I did my best with soap and water to wash the gum off his trousers. We went out on the crowded upper deck under a sift of soot and cinders from the smoke-stacks. It was a cloudy, chilly morning. We were near-

COMING UP THE ROAD

ing the dock. Beyond it was the great noisy town. We went ashore with our luggage and bargained with a cabman to take us to French's Hotel, City Hall Square.

New York was then mostly paved with Belgian blocks of stone. What a bumping and clatter of steel-tired wheels, what a beating of hoofs on the rough-surfaced streets of the city! What a babel of voices and lashing of whips! Truck-drivers were shouting to their horses and hurling curses at one another. There was a continuous roar on every side of us. New York was then a much noisier city than in this day of rubber tires, muffled enginery, smooth pavements and well-regulated traffic. With a vastly increased population, the streets are now much quieter, cleaner and better mannered. Not a hundredth part of the profanity, violence and ill nature, as plentiful as the horse-dung in the time of which I write, is now apparent in the main traveled streets of New York.

Clarke had stopped at French's Hotel when he had been in New York for a day or two, years before, hoping to be engaged as Mr. Dana's helper on the *Sun*. An army of able collegians had sought that job at one time or another.

French's was in our view the only hotel in New York. We found to our dismay that it was closed. Its long and honorable career was ended. Mc-

A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

Allister, its old chief clerk, sat in its dark dusty office directing people who came to other hostelries and no doubt receiving commissions for his work. He took us to Hall's Hotel on Chatham Street—a decaying relic of the elder time. It had got its death-blow from the elevated railroad structure which ran close to its upper windows. It had been an elegant place in the old time with mahogany and brass trimmings and alternating squares of black and white marble on its first floor. Those were the final and decisive marks of superior quality in a hotel.

A big young Irishman of polite manners and a beardless, pimply, fat face was its clerk, bell-boy and porter. He took us to our rooms above stairs. They were small rooms at a dollar a day each just for the room. We thought it a rather steep figure for us. I was changing my garments when I ran toward the door in a fright. There was a deafening crash and tumble. The building shook. I was in the midst of a man-made earthquake. It was an elevated railroad train with its laboring engine and its many shrieking, clattering wheels passing my open windows on a groaning structure in a narrow, walled canyon. What a shouting of steel and iron, what a creaking of wooden joints, what a passionate protest of inanimate objects at this clumsy effort of man to bend them to his will. It was an

earthquake, a landslide and a cyclone joined to destroy the peace of a neighborhood.

Clarke came in from his room across the hall. "Talk about the yell that split hell's concave and awoke the echoes of old Night!" he exclaimed. "I think that if Satan were to hear an elevated train on the second floor front of Hall's Hotel he would keep his mouth shut and sit quiet and take lessons in the art of making a noise."

We were homesick and unhappy but not dismayed. We decided to go at once and get a copy of the *Herald* and look for furnished rooms to rent. This we did, cutting out many ads and, with the help of our friendly landlord, mapping a route and noting down the means of transportation to cover it. This done we went to a large restaurant on Chatham Street and ate oatmeal porridge with bread and butter at a total expense of forty cents.

We went up-town on the Fourth Avenue horse-cars and began our quest on upper Lexington Avenue near the old home of President Arthur. In our wandering we found a back parlor bedroom in a respectable-looking, brownstone house on the north side of West Thirteenth Street between Third and Fourth Avenues. The blonde, firm, businesslike woman of some forty years would let us have this room at three dollars a week. She was a cold, calm, indifferent woman.

A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

We accepted the proposition, paid a week's rent in advance and were to take possession in the morning.

That night I tried to sleep with that elevated shuttle train that plied between the City Hall Station and Chatham Square. Every five minutes until midnight it seemed to leap over my bed and burst the walls with its clamor. Later it came every twenty minutes. I got the habit of waiting for it to come and of bracing myself for its horrid avalanche of deafening sound.

In the morning I felt somewhat damaged. We paid our bill and moved to our new home on Thirteenth Street. Its neighborhood was filled with the odor of roasting coffee. The sun was shining. The day was warm. Our room was comfortably furnished. It was like paradise after Hall's Hotel. We went to see Schermerhorn whose office was on Fourteenth Street not far from us. We were late, he said, for engagements to teach in South America that year. He would see what could be done.

My fraternity fellow, Walter H. Page, was on the editorial staff of the *World*. He, I felt sure, would do what he could for us. I found my way to the office of that newspaper on Park Row and asked for Mr. Page only to learn that he was in Europe. I went to the city editor of the *Tribune*

with no introduction. His staff was full. He regretted that he had no place for me. The city editor of the *Sun* was equally indifferent to my recommended talents.

We had cherished the notion that merit would command its place. As a matter of fact there were, no doubt, a thousand men in New York abler than we who, at that moment, were seeking a foothold on the press. We needed influence to break through. Every city editor was a college man, under pressure from many fellow alumni and from young men of newspaper training in other cities, for places on his staff. Even a man of real genius might starve in the face of this competition as I was to learn when, later, I found Stephen Crane living on the charity of a few friends, and gave his *Red Badge of Courage* to the public.

I returned to our room on Thirteenth Street with my conceit somewhat reduced. Clarke had been to Schermerhorn's. No news there. We were too late for teaching. The schools had made their engagements for the coming year. Newspaper work was now our one and only chance for employment. Our cheerful optimism had begun to leave us. We must live as economically as possible and keep trying.

At the Allman House on Fourth Avenue we

had found a decent, cleanly restaurant where we could get oatmeal porridge and milk for breakfast and luncheon at ten cents, a dinner of soup, roast beef, potatoes and pie at a quarter of a dollar. So our food cost us no more than fifty cents a day each. But for this stern economy our adventure would have ended in defeat.

We made a compact under which, until we were both employed, the success of one should be shared by the other. Clarke got the notion that there would be a market for well-written, witty editorial paragraphs. If we had had a more intimate knowledge of the gossip and many issues and personalities of the town I think that we would have done fairly well with this kind of work. Clarke was especially clever in one swing of his lash with a crack at the end of it. I sold a number of these paragraphs to the editor of *Truth* and was well paid for them. This helped our courage a bit. Still the return was far from prosperity.

Near us at the corner of Union Square and Fourteenth Street was Huber's big *Bier Garten*. A large band was playing there every evening until midnight. Weary at the end of the day and having nothing to spend but the night we went to bed early as we had been wont to do in our native land. Huber's brass band was in the garden beyond our windows and within two hundred feet of our

COMING UP THE ROAD

ears. We knew now why rents were low on that side of Thirteenth Street. It was bounded on the north, half the night, by a steady gale of German merriment and amplified music. The weather was warm and our windows must be open. A dozen pairs of well-trained lungs blowing into brazen trumpets can create a very considerable tempest. They needed rest now and then, and when they rested shouts of joy, loud laughter and merry songs took up the job of keeping us entertained. The entertainment was so spiced with variety and animation that it was an able sleep-resister. I remember that one number every night was a kind of epic of the barnyard—in which all the fowls and beasts on a German farm were skilfully imitated. Still it was easier to sleep with a German band than an elevated railroad. It seemed to us that sleeping in New York was a special art which one had to acquire. It was more difficult those days, when all sleeping-rooms were near the ground and a much noiser ground, than now.

Nature thickens the hide of the lashed mule and in time we grew indifferent to these slings and arrows of unwelcome sound.

I went to see fellow alumni in Brooklyn. They could only give me advice. I should hang on and keep trying they said. Of course they had their own problems and were very busy. I think that

one of them introduced me to the city editor of the *Eagle*. I was deliberate, timid, sensitive, and probably rather crude. Doubtless he saw the truth that I was not built for reporting. He had nothing then to offer.

Since I have had many reporters under me the reason for my failure to impress city editors is apparent. A reporter must have self-assurance, aggressiveness—the things known in the city room as “nerve” and “push.” He must be able to take rough treatment, even insult, with a degree of indifference. Through it all he must be polite and self-possessed. I had never a temperament to please a city editor or to produce the best results in the rush and hustle for news. There came a time, our money being more than half gone, when we were not so particular as to the kind of work to which we would lend our talents.

One morning I saw an ad in the *Herald* seeking an editor for a trade journal. I answered the ad setting forth as favorably as I could my qualifications. A letter came promptly, requesting me to call at the office of a certain hotel journal at 92 White Street. I went there and had a promising interview with its proprietor. He wanted an editor who would keep in touch with the leading hotel men of New York and write all the news of that trade—about two thousand words a day. It should

COMING UP THE ROAD

be in disconnected paragraphs, short and long, according to its importance. It must be well done. He said that a touch of humor would add to its effectiveness. There were many exchanges on which one could rely for a part of his copy.

"I think that I can demonstrate my fitness for the work," I said.

"Very well, try it for a day and we'll see how you get along with it," he answered. "Take a walk up Broadway. Call at the St. Nicholas, the Metropolitan, the Grand Central, the New York, Taylor's, the Sinclair, the Morton House. Then go on up Fourth Avenue to the Everett, the Clarendon, the Ashland, the Park Avenue, the Grand Union. Go through Forty-second Street to the Bristol, the Metropole, the St. Cloud. Go down Broadway to the St. James, the Continental and the Hoffman. Step across to Fifth Avenue and visit the Windsor, the Brunswick, the Albemarle, the Fifth Avenue and the Langham."

That was the list I was to visit on the trial day. I present it here because of the interesting fact that all of these celebrated hostelries have perished. They were the great hotels of New York, and not one of them survives.

I was to note the changes, if any, in each office force. I was to report proposed changes in structure. I was to tell of banquets booked for the

future, of amusing incidents and characters in the fluctuating life of the New York caravansary.

I made the tour. The head clerks, managers and even the proprietors were glad to answer my queries. I returned to the office with a lot of news. I sat down and wrote my copy. I put considerable work on certain of the items. When my task was finished it was late. The proprietor was still in his room. I took my sheaf of copy to his desk.

He said: "If you will sit down outside I will read what you have written and let you know in a few minutes what I think of it."

I was in great fear of failure. Here at last was a chance to get a foothold in New York—to put an end to our anxiety. I had done my best and if the result was worthless I should be sadly out of courage. A more tense half-hour than I spent in that waiting-room I have rarely known. Suddenly I heard him laughing loudly. Was it because he thought my effort so futile as to be ridiculous? Or had I really succeeded in amusing him with that "touch of humor" which he desired? The door opened.

"Will you please come in, sir?" he asked.

I entered.

"Sit down," he said. "You have done a good job. I am pleased with it. Please tell me what wages you desire?"

A great sense of relief came to me. I had never heard better news. I must now be careful not to discourage him with an extravagant demand. Money had become a tyrant whose smile was success, whose frown was terror.

"I would be willing to begin at ten dollars a week," I said.

He looked into my face and laughed and answered: "I would not be willing to engage you unless I felt sure that you could earn at least twenty. You may consider yourself engaged at that salary."

His words astonished me. Never before had I seen a man who was not eager to buy at the lowest possible price. I thanked him and looked at him in wonder. His was a new way of making money.

Not since my boyhood had I been so light-hearted as when I mounted a Broadway bus going up-town to take the good news to Clarke. He was overjoyed. We decided to celebrate the beginning of better things with a good feed. God knows we were in need of it. We went to the Hungarian restaurant on Union Square and had a course dinner at a dollar and a quarter—an extravagance which gave us a slight sense of guilt. That night we lay and talked and listened to the band. It was a better band than it used to be, we thought.

Clarke helped me some in the new work and

shared my salary until he got a job in a private school up in Connecticut. I was soon on friendly terms with many of the celebrated hotel men of the metropolis.

I wrote sketches of certain of these famous Bonifaces and their inns. Often they expressed approval of my work with gifts. These I hesitated to accept but they were urged upon me. If I entered a hotel at meal-time I was always invited to be a guest of the proprietor at one of his tables. At Christmas time I dined with Samuel Kiefer and his family at the Grand Central Hotel.

My paragraphs had created comment and some of them had been quoted in many newspapers. One day the chief called me to his desk. He had bought a new business. It was that of supplying biographical sketches and woodcut portraits of prominent people to newspapers. He wished me to write the sketches in addition to my other work. For this I should have a considerable increase of salary. I was getting along in the way to success. My enthusiasm grew with the magnitude of my task. One day a newspaper boy from a western city applied to me for work. He had nothing to do and was hungry. I gave him money and sent him on a tour of the hotels for news. He was a good reporter. He became a help to me and I a help to him.

After Clarke left me I tried one boarding-place after another until I arrived at the University Place Hotel at Ninth Street and University Place. It was a large, old, detached, brownstone mansion converted into a cheap hotel. There I met Rundle—a big, awkward, lovable, young man of about my own age from a town in rural New England. For a time we sat, side by side, at the table. We got a liking for each other and were soon sharing a large bedroom which increased our comfort while it reduced our expenses.

Rundle was six feet and two inches tall. He was overgrown, and he cherished an overgrown notion that he was a great bass singer. His father was, I think, very well-off. The young man had failed in his college examinations and had come to New York to seek his fortune. He longed to sing for the public. One may write for the public or speak for the public or work for the public without being turned upon even though his only talent is for sawing wood. But when a conceited youth who can not sing insists upon singing for the public he is in danger of hell-fire. He is guilty of a solecism for which there is no mercy in the heart of man. Rundle was so thoroughly convinced of his imagined talent that no one could save him from the wrath to come. I valued his friendship. So I just said nothing.

A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

He haunted theater offices and dramatic agencies. He was a fairly good-looking and agreeable fellow save when he resolved to sing. Then the resolution wrought a singular disfigurement of his features. His tongue seemed to be as large and clumsy and ill trained as his feet. It was not nimble enough to get out of the way of his voice. *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep* was his favorite song. How often I heard him execute it. His tones were powerful but foggy and colorless. His nadir of profundity was just a reach that ended in a grimace and a growl. I wonder that a young man of intelligence and good quality could have clung to such an illusion as he cherished. Being a rich man's son, and a mama's pride and pet in a rustic village, I suppose that he had been reared in an atmosphere of flattery and illusion. College associations would have set him right. No man of fair intelligence can run the college gauntlet and keep any foolish conceit in his head.

One evening he announced to me that his great chance had come. He was to sing that night at Harry Hill's famous Variety Theater on the east side. It would be a tryout at ten dollars. I had to work and could not go with him. Anyhow, I had not seen the inside of a theater since I came to New York. I had had no money for any kind of self-indulgence. I finished my task and went to bed.

Near midnight Rundle returned. He was badly soiled inside and out. He had been insulted. All kinds of vegetables had been hurled at him on the stage. While rocking in the cradle of the deep he had been hit fore and aft and amidships—mostly with ripe tomatoes. As a token of disapproval the ripe tomato has no rival in the vegetable kingdom. The song was wrecked. Rundle and the stage had to be cleaned up. That “gang of roughs and rowdies and cutthroats” didn’t know good music when they heard it, and he had told them so. I calmed the poor fellow and induced him to go to bed. He had had a hard time. Of course they had set him up for a mark to amuse the frank east-siders. Many had been warned that vegetables would be needed and had come with pockets filled. Nothing pleased them more than the hazing of a hick and they had given Rundle the third degree. It cured him. He ceased trying to be a nightingale and became, I am told, an able and successful business man.

I was in strange company at the University Place Hotel. Many of the stage folk of Aberle’s Eighth Street Theater lived there. Every afternoon singers, dancers, xylophonists, harpists and violinists were practising in their rooms. Their music was excellent, and no one complained of them. Now and then “Billy” Houghtaling, our

landlord, would lose his temper in the barroom at the foot of the grand staircase. He was in the main a kindly, good-natured man, but once in a while imposition pressed him so hard that he "blew up and went to pieces," as he was wont to say. Then his high-pitched tenor profanity could be heard from the cellar to the roof. It was utterly unfit even for ears that were hardened to high emotion.

Another guest was James Otis Kaler, author of *Toby Tyler*, *Mr. Stubb's Brother* and other famous books for boys. He was a most entertaining and delightful Maine Yankee, then of middle age. He was in constant communication with the great house of Harper and Brothers and often received its checks. That impressed me deeply. I went about with him a great deal. His talk, his manner, his humor, his work interested me. He had had little schooling but he was a born story-teller.

His friendship was in the nature of a luxury. He had a most capable imagination. It never ceased to be entertaining. He convinced me that I should make a large sum of money if I would help him to produce a play of circus life entitled *Sawdust and Spangles*. He needed only eighty dollars more for the expense of the first night at John Stetson's Theater in Boston. After that the

money would come rolling in. It is strange that he should have known that eighty dollars was just about the limit of my capacity. That was a stroke of genius. There was a man whose talent should never have been wasted on fiction.

I had saved about half the sum he asked for and by straining my credit I was able to borrow from my chief the balance needed. Mr. Kaler, the genial lady who shared his meals with him, and my money left New York together. What became of them all I have never known. My investment in *Sawdust and Spangles* was permanent. All things considered it was a good investment. It reduced my optimism of which I had a larger stock than I could afford to carry. Too much optimism is like too many horses. They eat their heads off. I doubt if *Sawdust and Spangles* was ever born. I am almost sure that it was never performed. Yet in spite of the worry and anxiety which my loss occasioned I have not ceased to think it a highly successful play. I had learned something worth knowing about chance acquaintances in Bohemia.

Soon I moved to a boarding-house in the eastern district of Brooklyn—then a delightful part of that city. I walked night and morning to and from the Roosevelt Street Ferry. It was an excellent boarding-house rather widely known in its neighborhood as “Mrs. Reilly’s.” Among the

boarders were men who became my valued friends: William Wood, managing editor of the *Brooklyn Daily Times*, a cheerful Scot of middle age; John Alden, a *Times* reporter just out of Rutgers, now on the editorial staff of *The Brooklyn Eagle*, and William Lynes, a happy-hearted New York lawyer and a bachelor. There were about a dozen of us who sat at its tables with Mrs. Reilly's handsome daughter and her young lady friends. It was a jolly company.

Often young people, mostly "the *Times* crowd" who lived in the neighborhood, would join us for a party soon after eight o'clock. Among them were Alexander Black, the novelist, then a *Times* reporter, and his wife; William Helmle, chief of the *Times* composing-room, and his wife; "Jimmy" Wood, another Scot, who was the famous police reporter on the *Eagle*, and his wife; Elbridge S. Brooks of the *Times* editorial staff, author of *Historic Boys*, *Historic Girls* and other popular books for young people, and a regular contributor to *St. Nicholas* and *Wide Awake*. He was a witty and delightful gentleman. His wife was one of the most charming women I have known. There were also in our group William Cassidy and Dave Buckman—fine young fellows of the *Times* city staff.

All these good people were often at our evening

parties. They were held in one house and another there in the eastern district. We sang and talked and played the piano and gave recitations. The favorite numbers were "Billy" Cassidy's imitation of Salvini, my own imitation of Lawrence Barrett in *Richard III*, "Billy" Wood's recitation of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* and "Jimmy" Wood's singing of *Simon, the Cellarer*. There were charming young ladies at these evening parties who could sing and play delightfully. The entertainment was purely literary and musical and of a rather high quality. One who had a talent which could serve us was urged to show it. There was no jazz, no cards, no booze, no midnight motoring, yet I am sure that no band of young people ever had merrier times. Now and then we danced.

In these associations I met Anna Detmar Schultz—a girl unlike any other I had seen. Generally, the parties ended with beer and sandwiches. Then we young fellows went home with the girls. Some of those nights I remember that I was rather late in getting home. As a rule midnight would have passed and the house would be dark and silent. Still they were to me ambrosial nights whose hours were a joy while they lasted and an imperishable memory when they had passed.

The time has come when I should speak of an ambition which I had cherished for years. It was

a most serious ambition. I wanted to be a Shakespearean actor. I was in Frobisher's Dramatic School on Fourteenth Street and played in his theater. Frobisher was a most kindly and delightful gentleman who was willing to take me without pay until success should crown my efforts. Fannie Gillette and Minna Gale, who became famous on the stage, were then students in Frobisher's School. I saw them later taking great rôles with Ristori and Lawrence Barrett. I studied also with F. F. Mackay, one of the greatest character actors the stage has known, who was willing to gamble on my success. I played important parts with the Amateur League of New York whose performances were given at the Lexington Avenue Opera House.

In the spring of 1883 my father fell ill. I went home to see him. Broken by sorrow and disappointment and anxious toil he was near his end. My success in New York had been a joy and comfort to him. The patient sacrifices for my sake were now being rewarded. He knew that my hands, the strength of which was largely of his making, would be equal to the task of providing for the loved ones he was soon to leave—my mother, sister and young brother. Within a month this typical, faithful, pioneer American father passed away.

My chief had moved his business to the Clipper

Building on Center Street where we had larger offices and better light. Our bookkeeper was telling me often of the immense profits that were being made from the sale of the woodcuts and biographical sketches to the newspapers. He thought that there was room for another business of the kind with an improved and newsier service and that we should be able to make a fortune by starting it. I should never have listened to the voice of the tempter, but I did. To be sure we only discussed the idea. But looking back on the matter I am not much pleased with myself for having even entertained it. Our unquestioning devotion was due to our employer as long as we were on his pay-roll. The young are apt to be thoughtless, even reckless in their eager quest for advancement. I went one day to a new friend of mine—Mrs. Frank Leslie, the publisher, to get her advice in the matter. She set me right by telling me to stick to my job. I turned against the enterprise but said nothing of my reason for doing so. The bookkeeper heard of my going to Mrs. Leslie and concluded that I was subtly trying to steal his plan and go on without him. He reported to our chief that I was about to start a rival business. This was going rather far. I could easily write strong words of that proceeding but I do not. We both deserved what we got—an

immediate discharge. That day I was taken on the city staff of the *Brooklyn Daily Times* at the same salary I had been receiving. Again I had a poor opinion of myself.

I record here with great satisfaction the fact that my former chief came to understand and respect me. We had a friendship for each other like that between brothers. I remember a day, years later, when I was in business without sufficient capital and sorely put to it to carry my load and he came to me with a check for a sum in four figures and said:

"Bacheller, I want you to take this money and use it. If you are ever able to pay it back, well and good. If you do not I can get along without it."

Three times he helped me in a like manner over steep grades. He was from Prussia, and his name was *Louis Klopsch*. I wish the name to be printed here in emphatic type because it is the name of one of the noblest Christian gentlemen I have known.

There came a day when I had some influence in New York and when I was able to do him a great service. It was the kind of service that one asks only of his dearest friend.

In December, 1883, I was married to Miss Schultz who became a force in my life not less

important than that of my mother. She was dearer to me than my professional plan, and in deference to her wishes I gave it up.

I was not and could not be, I think, a first-class reporter. But I had done for the *Times* some rather good work. I was the naval and military editor when the Greeley Relief Expedition, bound for the Arctic regions under Commander Schley, was being equipped at the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

I heard by chance of an interesting diary of Greeley's adventures in the Far North which was in the possession of his mother. Lieutenant Emory who was to command the *Bear* of the relief fleet had seen it. I knew that he would arrive at the Brunswick, on Fifth Avenue, late in the evening of a certain day. I was there waiting for him to arrive. I waited in an office chair until two in the morning when the clerk sent word to me that Lieutenant Emory had just arrived. He was a big, handsome, husky young man of some thirty years—a Virginian if I remember rightly. It touched him to learn that I had been waiting since nine o'clock.

Yes, he had Greeley's diary and would be glad to let me take it. I had got a scoop of considerable importance. It went out broadcast in the Associated Press reports credited to my paper.

I was out every evening and morning at arm-

ories, G. A. R. reunions and street-parades,—I remember that one of them was reviewed by General Grant near whom I sat,—church parties, Jewish weddings, banquets, political meetings. It was mostly the kind of thing in which I felt no interest.

I knew Mr. Beecher well. He was a great-hearted man. I remember a morning when I sat with him in his study. Mrs. Beecher came and said:

“Father, there’s a man at the door who says that he has been out of work for weeks. He wants to know if you can help him.”

“Oh, mother,” he answered, “I can’t be giving money to every one that comes to the door. He ought to go to our Charity Bureau.”

Mrs. Beecher was about to turn away when the great man called her to his desk.

“Do you think that he’s honest about it?” he asked.

“Yes, I do.”

Mr. Beecher began to draw a check payable to bearer.

“Poor soul!” he exclaimed, “I suppose that he is in great trouble. Give him this little check.”

Now Talmage, whom I knew well, was different. In the pulpit he had tremendous dramatic power—a voice as clear and penetrating as well-blown bugle notes. His bolt—the climax of his argument

—fell like lightning and often as swiftly and unexpectedly. Sundays some five thousand were in his great circular temple. Among them would be men in sore trouble. They would go to his house and put his religion to the test I had witnessed in Mr. Beecher's study. I doubt not that Talmage would have been equal to it. But no beggar's appeal could get to him, he was so hedged in by well-meaning people. I think that the servants at his home were not always quite truthful in their efforts to protect him from intrusion—a great injustice to the famous pulpiteer. I am inclined to think that some sorely-pressed man who had been told that Doctor Talmage was not at home had waited in the neighborhood and finally seen him come out of the house. In some such fashion the whirlwind was sown. His church was destroyed by fire and rebuilt and rededestroyed three times if I remember rightly. It was a pity that this remarkable man should have been driven out of Brooklyn with a broken spirit by incendiarism.

I feel like taking off my hat when I speak of Beecher. Whatever the cynics and muck-hunters may say of him, he was, I think, a great and noble citizen—a worthy follower of his Master. The dignity and vital power in his spirit could not be dimmed or destroyed by the designs of evil men and women. He went on with his work trium-

phantly, and they went on downward into despised obscurity.

In the pulpit he did not preach, he talked—delightfully, powerfully and often in a charming vein of humor.

I went out to Peekskill to interview him one summer day in the campaign of 1884. I questioned him on a subject regarding which he would not speak. To every query he answered:

“It’s a beautiful morning.”

I was a little embarrassed. He had been rather cold and distant. Suddenly he came and took my hand and said: “Boy, dinner is ready and I want you to come and eat with us.”

He would not take “no” for an answer. At the table were his wife and sons and Mrs. Stowe, a little white-haired lady, and Doctor Edward Beecher. Henry Ward Beecher was a jolly man. He joked and laughed with the party on the luxury of being a farmer.

“Ed, take another thousand dollars’ worth,” he said to his brother as he passed the platter of corn.

Dinner over he drove me to the station with a fine pair of young trotters.

After six months or more of knocking about on the city staff they decided to try me as dramatic editor. Then four or five nights a week I was going from one theater to another. It was a time

of great players. For a generation the stage had been recruiting its ranks from men and women of scholarship and genius. Its best players filled the world with their fame. Booth, Irving, Salvini, Barrett, McCullough, Wallack, Jefferson, Raymond, Terry, Modjeska, Bernhardt, Ristori, Jannauschek, were men and women of character, dignity and transcendent genius. To feel the power in their faces, their voices, their action, was to have an experience one could never forget. It put me in the mood of reverence to see the admirable grace and noble restraint of Booth in Hamlet, to feel the perfect art of Irving in Louis XI, and of Barrett in Cassius; to behold the majestic figure of Salvini and hear the great organ-like tones of his voice in Othello. One knew after seeing any of these players that no little thing had happened to him.

The main theme that engaged the art of these great men and women was the essential dignity of the human spirit and the infinite pathos in its breaking down. It is as true now as it was then that great motives are the bone and sinew of great people.

Patti and Campanini or Melba were singing at the old Academy of Music. Was it not the inspiration that came from a theater so amply furnished that made young men and women content with evenings of song and of noble lines well

spoken. I recall that Sidney Woollett could crowd the Madison Square Theater with young and old, eager to hear him read the poetry of Tennyson or Shakespeare.

In the winter of 1913 I went to see Tommasso Salvini at his villa in Florence. He was an old gentleman of eighty-four. I told him that I had seen his Othello thirteen times and reminded him of special effects in his interpretation which had deeply impressed me. He told me of the apprehension with which he had begun his first American tour, of his opening in Philadelphia, of the enthusiastic men who leaped over the footlights at the end of the fourth act and embraced him. As he spoke of those days of glory—the like of which no player had ever known—tears flowed down his cheeks.

It happened that Henry Irving came for his first American tour that season. I had written a sketch of the eminent player from data in the files. My humble effort had pleased him, and he invited me to come and see him at the Brevoort House. There I met Mr. Irving and Bram Stoker his manager. I met also their intimate friend, Joseph Hatton, the English novelist, who had come across to write Irving's impressions of America.

Mr. Hatton had brought with him the manuscript of a new novel. He asked me to try to sell for him the American serial rights. He suggested

that I should make an effort to place it in the leading newspapers of the United States and Canada for simultaneous publication in weekly instalments. The novels of Miss Braddon, Walter Besant and William Black were being thus serialized successfully in British newspapers by Tillotson & Son of Bolton, England.

I wrote a circular offering the novel to a large list of newspapers. The result was not encouraging. So I took the manuscript to Robert Bonner of the *Ledger*. He was glad to buy the American serial rights at thirty-five hundred dollars. For my services in the matter Mr. Hatton gave me five hundred dollars. It looked like an immense sum to me. I got a thrill from its possession that much larger sums, since then, have failed to produce.

Mr. Hatton proposed that he would be glad to write for the American newspaper press a series of interview sketches of the most eminent men and women in the United Kingdom. Gladstone, John Ruskin, William Black, Walter Besant, Thomas Hardy, Miss Braddon, James Payn, editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*, Henry Irving, John Hare, Lord Salisbury were among those of whom he proposed to write. I devised an attractive prospectus of the series and had some contract forms printed, covering a year's service. I got a short

A PERIOD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT

leave of absence from the editorial manager of the *Times* and set out on a tour of the leading cities. I went to Boston, Springfield, Albany, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Louisville, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Washington and Philadelphia. I spent every night on a sleeping car. The signed contracts in my possession, when I alighted from the last train, insured me a weekly profit greater than my salary from the *Times*. So the first newspaper syndicate in America was formed.

Soon I had so much outside work on my hands that I could not render a just return to my employers in Brooklyn. So with a lasting sense of gratitude for their kindness I left my desk and comrades in the office of the *Brooklyn Daily Times*. Within a week I had opened a small office of my own in the Vanderbilt Building on Nassau Street, near Park Row, New York. I began to seek material of interest to large newspapers.

I was young and my experience had not been sufficient to qualify me for the difficult task I had undertaken. I had almost no acquaintance with the literature of the time or its producers. Of course I was quite familiar with the poetry of Tennyson, who was still writing, and with that

of Holmes and Whittier, who were then very old gentlemen. I went to Boston and Danvers to see them. I was a real optimist cherishing the hope that one or the other could be induced to write his reminiscences for the newspapers while their old friends of *The Atlantic Monthly* were begging for copy and sitting with cold feet because the lights of New England were going out.

Doctor Holmes, a cheerful man, his head well covered with snowy hair, had close-cropped, white side-whiskers and dark eyes with a kindly light in them. He was then on "the lonely summit of fourscore." With a gentle smile on his face he invited me to sit down with him by the fireside in his study. He wished to know all about my plan. I put it before him. He was interested and, I think, a bit amused by my youthful optimism. How careful he was not to hurt me and to give me as little discouragement as possible! His writing was mostly done. Anything more that he might find strength to do had its appointed destination. He took me to the windows of his study and showed me the view extending to the Charles River.

I found Whittier at his home in Danvers. It was a small frame house. A number of elderly women of his family were with him. He had thin white hair and a rather close-trimmed white beard

shaved to a line about half an inch below his lips. His manner was more aged and solemn than that of Doctor Holmes. He spoke of the Bachellers and Batchelors of New England and of his relation to that family. He asked me to sit down by him. I did so much overawed. A gray shawl was around his shoulders. I spoke of my personal obligation for the pleasure and inspiration which his poems had given me. He thanked me, but he was not much impressed. Of course, the pilgrims to that simple home of the poet were wont to weary him with adulation.

Not hopefully I presented my plan. He listened, leaning forward a little on his cane. This effort of mine to get the gods of old New England to write for the vulgar newspapers amuses me when I think of it. No doubt it amused the venerable poet. Think of my asking him to dictate his reminiscences to a stenographer! He smiled. What was the world coming to? I could see that query in his face. He was kind but—he had ceased to write. If anything should come to him to be written it must go where all his writing had gone—to *The Atlantic Monthly*. One might as well try to change the course of a mountain stream by telling it of a better route to the ocean.

With my new idea I went to Hartford to see Mark Twain. I had read nothing of his save

The Leaping Frog of Calaveras and two or three of his shorter tales. I found him in his billiard-room up one flight of stairs, smoking a cob pipe. He asked me to sit down with him by a broad window looking out upon a snow-covered field and leafless trees. He had a sad face. He talked in a sorrowful tone. He listened to my plan.

"No," he said, "I am writing these days exclusively for the fireplace. All I can say for my product is this—it burns well."

None of these great men would do business with me. I got the most brilliant newspaper writers in New York who were then A. C. Wheeler (Nym Crinkle), Amos Cummings and Blakely Hall to write for me on timely topics. I was able to buy some short tales from Julian Hawthorne, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Rose Terry Cooke, Elizabeth Stuart Phelps and Mary E. Wilkins. Some twenty newspapers in different cities were soon taking from me a regular supply of copy for their Saturday and Sunday editions. I was having a hard time to make my payments on time. I needed capital. Soon James W. Johnson—a young man of considerable means and of high character—became my partner in the enterprise. With five thousand dollars of added capital we found our way to success. The business grew. Bill Nye, the most popular humorist of that time, became a

member of our staff of writers. I went to England and employed an agent in London. He sent us the first tales of W. W. Jacobs, Stanley Weyman and Anthony Hope and some by James Payn and George Gissing.

Hamlin Garland, a handsome, bearded young man from the Middle West, whose vivid tales of the prairie folk had made him famous, called to see me. His work was in eager demand. He became one of my contributors and most valued friends.

Twice a year I went nearly across the continent to all the big cities, climbing stairways into ratty old editorial rooms at all hours of the day and night, to talk with managing editors. Slowly I acquired knowledge of the kind of thing most useful to them. Once I returned with a contract for twenty-five thousand dollars. It covered the use of our entire output in the "ready print" weekly papers after it had appeared in the big Sunday editions. The term was five years.

One incident of those days led to the uncovering of interesting history. A man sold me a thrilling tale. It turned out to be Fitz James O'Brien's *Night of Terror*, copied verbatim from *Harper's Magazine* of October, 1856. I sued the plagiarist. His defense was that he knew O'Brien intimately, that he had given him the tale to read and that O'Brien must have copied and sold it.

Now O'Brien was a man of genius. He was the author of *The Diamond Lense*. I found the one man who could refute this libel. It was F. H. T. Bellew, then an old man of the ancient crowd of Bohemians who frequented Pfaff's saloon. He was rooming with O'Brien when the later wrote the tale in question. He saw him write it. A retired bookkeeper more than eighty years of age came into court and testified that he had paid O'Brien thirty dollars for the story.

My lawyer, Frederic W. Hinrichs, had pushed the thief to the prison door. Then on account of his old age we let him go. But no one ever sold me another copied story after that.

We were then in the Tribune Building. We enlarged our suite of rooms and had a capable office force, our own illustrators and photoengraving plant. A great mass of manuscript was now arriving every day from all sides of the continent for our consideration. We needed and secured an editorial assistant. Johnson was able to give me good help in the traveling and soliciting and on the task of finding the copy we required. Rather sound judgment had come to me as to the type of story and article that would make an impression.

CHAPTER XIV

THE HIGH-BROW DECADE

KIPLING had come into town from India via San Francisco—an unknown youth seeking his fortune. He knew not—nobody knew—that it was partly in a bag which he carried in his hand and partly in his imagination. The bag contained *Plain Tales from the Hills*, some clipped from obscure Indian newspapers in which they had first appeared, some in unpublished manuscript. The story was that he went down to Franklin Square with his bag in his hand. He asked for the editor and was shown up the old spiral stairway to the editorial rooms. He went into the little room where Mr. Alden sat. The young man explained to Mr. Alden that he was sailing for England two days later; that he had a lot of stuff in his bag and that he would be glad if the editor could find time to look at it in the next day or so. Mr. Alden observed the size of the bundle and smiled upon this swarthy youth from India. There was nothing in his look and manner to distinguish him from the many eager candidates for editorial favor

who were constantly coming there in a hurry for judgment on their wares.

The editors of the great magazines were regarded with awe those days. They knew their power. Their bearing was king-like. Their retainers had the Olympian look and tone. They dwelt in the rarified and chilly atmosphere of high levels. "The Satraps of the Century" was a current phrase on Park Row. It was a sober recognition of rank and authority. There was no touch of derision in the words. From 1884 to 1895 was the high-brow decade. Never since the time of Samuel Johnson was the brow of literature so exalted and so serenely self-satisfied. The brow of statesmanship was on a like level of altitude—the Conkling level. It must be said, however, that there were distinguished statesmen then and that the best magazines the world has known were being made in New York.

A great banker who is my neighbor has told me of seeing Mr. Conkling in the week of the memorable Chicago convention when he nominated Grant. The senator was striding up and down a corridor of the Grand Pacific Hotel. A man ventured to speak to him. Conkling waved him aside and answered with crushing dignity:

"Sir, you annoy me."

When Kipling entered the modest little room in

Franklin Square, Mr. Alden was very busy. He would be glad to have the manuscript examined and in due course to report upon it. Justice to the writer and to themselves demanded that such work should be done with deliberation. At least a week or ten days would be required for the task.

The swarthy young man—a forthright individual—chucked the bundle into his bag and said, “Good morning,” and went away. One may almost say that the greatest opportunity which ever knocked at the doors of an American publishing house had passed.

Kipling went to London and fell in with Wolcott Balestier at a boarding-house. The *Plain Tales* began to appear simultaneously in England and America, there being no international copyright laws to protect them here. The English-speaking world had seen nothing like them. It was astonished at their rugged strength and vital quality. A new star, whose light was dimming all others, had suddenly arisen. One of Kipling’s tales from an English magazine was reprinted in a Harper periodical. While under no legal obligation to pay for it the firm sent a check for two pounds to Mr. Kipling “in acknowledgment.” Soon after, the author of the *Plain Tales*, indignant over this check and its accompanying note, which was in his view like the confession of a thief, went in hot haste

COMING UP THE ROAD

to Besant's house. These people who had been so indifferent to his bag of treasure and who had boasted of their deliberation in the treatment of copy had been swift to steal it. There is ample evidence of his bitter feeling when he met Hardy and Black and Besant at the latter's house and indignantly told of the "Yankee privateer." Later he wrote *The Rhyme of the Three Captains*, beginning:

"At the close of a winter day,
Their anchors down, by London town, the Three
Great Captains lay;
And one was Admiral of the north from Solway
Firth to Skye, [Black]
And one was Lord of the Wessex coast and all
the lands thereby, [Hardy]
And one was Master of the Thames from Lime-
house to Blackwall,
And he was the Captain of the Fleet—the brav-
est of them all. [Besant]
Their good guns guarded their great grey sides
that were thirty foot in the sheer,
When there came a certain trading brig with news
of a privateer." [Kipling]

As the trading brig tells its tale of the Yankee privateer one feels that the English language is incapable of expressing a more violent mood.

That was the story which was current in Park Row. A part of it had come from London and

a part of it from New York. I think that it is true. In my time the gossip of Park Row with its far-reaching drag-net was apt to be well founded.

The remarkable tales of Arthur Conan Doyle had begun their travels. They were even more widely read than Kipling's. They employed a motive unused by men of genius since Poe had set a mark with it. The character and exploits of Sherlock Holmes kept the lights burning late in many a bedchamber and had their part in the talk of every dinner party.

One day Ballard Smith, then managing editor of the *World*, sent for me. He wished to know if I would go to London at once and try to make a contract with Doyle for a series of tales. The *World* would pay half the cost of them for New York rights. Within a week I was on my way to London with letters of introduction from E. C. Stedman, Gilbert Parker—then a beautiful, clear-eyed young man with a full brown beard—and others.

I wrote to Doyle as soon as I got to London, enclosing my letter of introduction and frankly confessing my purpose. His answer was cordial but firm in tone. He would be glad to meet me, but he could make no further engagements to write. I went to luncheon with him at the Reform Club.

Doyle was a tall, brawny, magnificent young physician whose phenomenal success as a writer had driven him out of practise. I have never forgotten his ruddy cheeks or his kindly, cheerful, good nature. He told me that all his tales went to Sir George Newnes of the *Strand Magazine* who seemed to be glad to pay for them more than Doyle could imagine them to be worth.

"If it's a fair question how much may that be?" I asked.

"Fifteen guineas for every thousand words."

"I do not think it enough," I declared. "Authors have been always underpaid. I offer you double that amount for the American serial rights of all your work and will pay you cash on delivery of manuscript and make a contract for two years."

Doctor Doyle put down his fork and looked at me. He saw that I meant it.

"This is an astonishing offer," he said. "You must give me a few days in which to think it over."

I went out to his home, in a place called Norwood, if I remember rightly, for luncheon at the end of that week. Doctor Doyle had meanwhile written the first tale of a long series for my syndicate. Its title was *The Lord of Château Noir*. It was followed by *The Exploits of the Brigadier Gerard*.

I knew not nor did he that our contract was the

beginning of a new era for authors. Doubled prices went down the line as it was bound to do. Soon every writer of real popularity was receiving a like rate for first publication. Now often as much as a dollar a word is paid for serial rights to the popular favorites.

My London agent, Mr. Arthur Waugh, had secured for me the first option on the work of Rudyard Kipling, then probably in his most productive period. The *Jungle Tales* and some of his ballads were flowing out to an eager public. A number of these tales and ballads appeared first in my syndicate service. It was now generally recognized as an important medium. Our office was on the pay-rolls of nearly all the leading newspapers in the United States for some amount. I can think of only three exceptions—the *Philadelphia Ledger*, the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Baltimore American*. I had become a fairly successful editor and business man.

I rarely met Clarke—my comrade of other days. He had married. His old friends saw little of him and nothing of his wife. He was not the type of man to make a fortunate marriage. It has ever been my hope that he did. He came to see me, now and then, but for some reason he never invited me to meet his wife. He was a man of learning, of high talent and of enthusiasms intense and tire-

less as a mountain stream. But as I have said before he had not common sense. Any one who got his confidence could in ten minutes convince him that his best friends were in fact his worst enemies. He was a human curiosity the like of whom I have never known. For a time he had been with me. His high temper and curious eccentricities broke the peace of the office. It was amusing to see Clarke in a temper, and some one was often yielding to the temptation to provoke him—much to my regret. He found a task more to his liking and left me. Later the Democratic political forces in the Annexed District started a paper and hired him to edit it. I think that he was successful in this task.

Years later when I was writing *Eben Holden* he came one day to my study. He needed some money. It was not a large sum. I was glad to lend it to him. I never met him again. I suppose that he saw no time when he could conveniently return the sum he had borrowed. That was a little matter, but it was a sorrow thus to lose a friend whom I regarded with gratitude and affection. Probably he never knew that his friendship was more to me than money. At one time and another I tried to find him but in vain. One never forgets an old-time friend. Some two or three years ago a note in the newspapers announced his death.

My valued friend and able assistant, James W. Johnson, had inherited a considerable fortune. He wished to retire to his ancestral estate near Binghamton with his many horses and dogs and guns and fishing-rods. I bought his interest in the business, and he left me. He had put five thousand dollars into my little enterprise and in five years had drawn from it forty-eight thousand dollars.

I remember a day when Eugene Field came to my office. He was a tall, smooth-faced, merry-hearted young man about thirty-three years of age. He had a deep resonant voice. I have never known a man who chewed so large a quid of tobacco. He was almost a passionate consumer of "fine-cut." One of his ruddy cheeks generally had a bulge in it. His talk was full of merry jests. He brought with him a letter of introduction and a bundle of copy—some seventy pages of his own beautiful script with rubricated initials and quaint drawings made by his own hand. It was called *The Shadwell Folio*. It purported to be a relic of ancient Chicago discovered in excavations. It contained *The Lyttel Boy*, *The Crewel Sassinger Mill* and many other charming poems, in old English spelling, with humorous comment. I bought the serial rights to this quaint production, and he agreed to write a short story for me. The story which came later was *The Jinin' Farms*.

He was with me a part of every day for a week or so. We went to many of the famous Bohemian resorts—the Black Cat, Pedro's, Cobweb Hall, Marie's.

One day we went to De Voe's shop where all shades of colored ink were to be had. Field used many colors in making a script like *The Shadwell Folio*. He would have it that the young lady who waited on us had conceived a liking for me. When he returned to Chicago he sent me a little ballad beginning:

“There was a fascinating minx
Of winsome ways, I trow
Who sold the many-colored inks
Put up by one De Voe.”

That and other letters he wrote to me have flown away on some of the many winds that have been blowing since then. What more his fancy led him to write of the fascinating minx, I do not remember.

One day a pale slim youth with blue-gray eyes, a rather dark skin and a cast of countenance “comely and good to look upon,” as the ancients were wont to say, came to my office. His head was picturesque and beautiful in its shape and poise. He said that his name was Stephen Crane. I had heard of him. He had come to New York to try

to earn a living with his pen and was finding it a difficult thing to do. There were certain editors on Park Row who because of their liking for the boy gave him an assignment now and then. He was not a trained reporter and lacked the "iron-bound nerve" to be expert in that kind of service. But one editor had discovered his great and unusual gift for vivid phrasing. This editor whom I met often at Mouquin's on Fulton Street was the brilliant and now famous Ed Marshall. He had begun to talk of a remarkable young chap of the name of Stephen Crane. Meanwhile, the boy was sleeping in artists' studios and eating, mostly, the bread of friendship. I knew nothing of that when he came to my office, but I had acquired some notion of his talents.

He brought with him a bundle of manuscript. He spoke of it modestly. There was in his words no touch of the hopeful enthusiasm with which I presume he had once regarded it. No doubt it had come back to him from the "satraps" of the great magazines. They had chilled his ardor, if he ever had any, over the immortal thing he had accomplished. This is about what he said:

"Mr. Howells and Hamlin Garland have read this stuff and they think it's good. I wish you'd read it and whether you wish to use the story or not, I'd be glad to have your frank opinion of it."

COMING UP THE ROAD

The manuscript was a bit soiled from much handling. It had not been typed. It was in the clearly legible and rather handsome script of the author. I took it home with me that evening. My wife and I spent more than half the night reading it aloud to each other. We got far along in the story, thrilled by its power and vividness. In the morning I sent for Crane and made an arrangement with him to use about fifty thousand of his magic words as a serial. I had no place for a story of that length, but I decided to take the chance of putting it out in instalments far beyond the length of those permitted by my contracts. It was an experiment based on the hope that my judgment would swing my editors into line. They agreed with me.

So it happened that the vital part of *The Red Badge of Courage* first went out to the public. Its quality was immediately felt and recognized. Mr. Talcott Williams, the able editor of the *Philadelphia Press*, one of the newspapers in which it had appeared, begged me to bring Crane to his office.

One afternoon Stephen and I went over to Philadelphia. We presented ourselves at Mr. Williams' sanctum. Word flew from cellar to roof that the great Stephen Crane was in the office. Editors, reporters, compositors, proof-readers crowded

around him shaking his hand. It was a revelation of the commanding power of genius. When at last the tower is up and the lamp set and burning, how swiftly its light penetrates into all the highways and byways! It has a power like that of radium.

Soon Crane's book came out and was almost immediately the one literary theme of the English-speaking world. A query was in all the wondering of critics and reviewers. He had been a mere boy not twenty-five years old who had never seen a battle-field when the book was written. How had he been able to write of war with a vividness unparalleled in English literature?

Now there were certain young fellows on Park Row who had some skill in writing. They cherished the hope of winning literary fame. Crane's rise had stimulated their ambition. These were Willis Brooks Hawkins,—“a most cheerful companion, a man of playful whims and quaint and delightful fancies,”—Charles W. Hooke, a humorist and a successful writer of mystery tales; Post Wheeler, until lately Secretary of our Legation in London; Tom Masson, a delightful humorist and for many years the managing editor of *Life*; Edward Marshall then the most brilliant of the young editors on Park Row, and myself. Often we dined together, generally at Mouquin's. Crane became one of us.

We organized the Lantern Club and hired a quaint little house in a part of William Street anciently and still known as Monkey Hill. We approached it by a hanging iron stairway that climbed the side of a brick building occupied by an iron-monger. We landed on a broad roof which was the cover of a stable-yard. From its level we ascended three or four steps to our door. Now the picturesque and unusual structure which became our club-house was founded on the rear end of the iron-monger's shop. Its form suggested that of a small Swiss chalet. The roof covered only one square room. It had a fireplace and was connected by a passageway with a biggish room above the monger's shop overlooking the street. This became our kitchen. Our main room was delightfully furnished with old mahogany. There were broad, comfortable window-seats and lounges upholstered in red leather. Our decorations were mostly lanterns—Oriental, colonial, ancient and medieval. We had many varieties of these portable windows, some very beautiful in shape and color. Indeed, the box of light was our symbol. We hung an old ship's lantern on a wrought-iron bracket outside our door. Its glimmering panes at night as we mounted the last step of the iron stairway were good to look upon. Soon we named our club "The Sign o' the Lanthorne." It became a famous

place and many great men broke our bread with us and sat by our fireside. It was a snug harbor, quite hidden in the midst of the busy town with the steel network of the Brooklyn Bridge decorating the sky far above it. We hired an excellent negro cook and went every week-day to The Sign o' the Lanthorne for our luncheon and for dinner every Saturday evening. They made me president of this little club.

At our dinners we read short tales and poems to one another. The tales dealt mostly with the fading old-time color of the town. Every man felt free to indulge in the frankest criticism. We were no mutual-admiration society. It was hard to get a word of praise from any of us. If we liked a thing we were apt to hold our peace and give the man who read it a pat on the shoulder or an approving look.

I remember well the evening when I had my trial in a little tale of an old violin shop on the Bowery. I was scared. A dead silence fell in the reading and continued for a moment or so after I had finished. I knew then that I had made some slight impression on those "hard-boiled" fellows. Later in confidence two or three of them gave me their opinion of it. The little tale had its faults, but it was rich in color. Soon after it went out to the public in *The Cosmopolitan Magazine*, then

ably edited by Mr. Arthur Sherburne Hardy. Many kind letters came to me from people who professed to like it. Among them was one from Elbert Hubbard begging that I let him put it in a Roycroft setting. Pleased by his praise and plan I told him to go ahead. It came out, but not until *Eben Holden* began its wild career, in two hand-illuminated editions: one in limp leather at two dollars, one on Japanese vellum, richly bound, at ten dollars.

This trifle marks rather definitely the beginning of my literary career. I was a spoiled business man after that. My heart was in the highlands whose beauty and joy I had begun to feel. I had written in my leisure four ballads, two of which had traveled far and brought me letters of approval from Professor Boyeson and Bliss Carman.

I shall never forget an evening I spent with Edmund Clarence Stedman in his home after I had written my first ballad. He went over it with me, line by line, very patiently and told me more of the art of writing verse than I had learned in all my study. Stedman was a nervous, petulant, little man with a great heart. A poet of real insight and a very high gift of self-expression, a brilliant critic of international fame, he was most generous in giving help and counsel to young men

and women of promise who were trying to find their way to literary distinction. Though never a strong man, often after coming home wearied by the burdens of the day in Wall Street, he gave his evenings to those who needed his help. Many successful writers were discovered by him. Harry Harland, whose *Cardinal's Snuff Box* will live as a work of art, was a notable instance.

Using my holidays and a part of each Sunday for the purpose, I had written a short novel entitled *The Master of Silence*. Stedman kindly read the manuscript and wrote me a most encouraging letter about it. Largely because of his indorsement Charles L. Webster & Company, Mark Twain's firm, put it out in book form after its publication in the syndicate. It was too much for them. The firm died after six hundred copies of the book had been sold. So it went out of print. *The Master of Silence* was built around a new idea. There were respectable people who liked it. As a first effort it was well enough, but it was not a thing of much importance.

So it had come about that I knew, after my success at *The Sign o' the Lanthorne*, that I had it in me to write in a fashion which would, at least, give me some pleasure in doing it. I longed then to be released from the cares of business.

It was a great day at our little club when Mark

COMING UP THE ROAD

Twain went with me to luncheon there. It was a damp, chilly, winter day with snow on the pavements. Hot coals were glowing cheerfully in our fireplace. The room was warm. The boys were all there to greet our distinguished guest. He took a hot Scotch as he warmed himself at the fireside. We sat down to luncheon. He liked the atmosphere of the place. He began to talk. In the right environment and company he loved to talk. He could be kind and agreeable anywhere but in uncongenial surroundings he could be terribly sad and silent.

Yes, he would have some mince pie. When a thing didn't agree with him he kept at it until one or the other got the best of it. Luncheon over he sat down with a long Cuban cigar before the fireplace, his feet resting on a chair-seat. He drank another hot Scotch and began smoking and talking.

While we sat around him, he told us stories of life on the Mississippi, many of which had appeared in his famous book of that title, but to us he adorned them with verbal fire-works not to be found in the printed text—the picturesque, fluent and unpremeditated profanity of the old frontier. Turning to me presently, he remarked that he made a point of the finish of a tale.

“I try to get a double snapper at the end,” he

said: "one to produce the effect I seek; the other to prolong it. I have thought of a story, and I don't know how to end it. A young man raised in the country goes to New York and engages in business. He has a real talent for business. He succeeds; his rise is rapid; his work absorbing. Busy years pass. He has never found time to return to his native heath or even to get married. His health suffers from the strain of prolonged, unbroken devotion to his tasks. His physician tells him that he must take a rest. Well, he begins to consider how he will practise the difficult art of resting. He thinks of the old beloved countryside and especially of Mary, the girl in whom he was interested as a boy. He had heard that she had never married. He wonders if it is because she was as fond of him as he had been of her. He decides that he will return to the scenes of his youth and try to find Mary. That is what he does. He takes a train and after a long ride of a day and a night he disembarks and drives ten miles into the country to the neighborhood that he knew and loved as a boy. He is made welcome at the home of his Cousin John. He learns that Mary is away on a visit. He tramps over the familiar trails; he fishes in the brook that he had fished in years before; he rides over the lonely country roads. One day, riding alone in a top-buggy on one of

these roads, he comes out of a piece of woods, and down a hillside. There opposite the road is the old swimming-hole. Well, it's a hot and dusty day. The road is little traveled. He says to himself: 'Why shouldn't I stop the old horse here and go and take off my clothes and jump into the water and have a refreshing bath just as I used to do when I was a boy?'

"He hitches the horse to the fence; takes off his clothes and jumps into the water and swims around just as he had done in old times. He comes out and dries himself as he used to when he was a boy, flicking off the water with his hands. He puts on his undershirt and his overshirt and his collar and his necktie, and suddenly he hears a team coming.

"It is near, and he hasn't time to dress the lower part of himself. He jumps into the buggy and draws the lap-robe over his nakedness, having decided to finish dressing when the team had passed. Suddenly a wagon comes out of the woods and down the hillside, and in the wagon he sees Mary and some friends.

" 'Hullo, Mary,' he shouts, and she calls back, 'Hullo Bill.'

"The wagon stops. Mary wonders why Bill does not come over and greet her. In a moment she jumps out and goes to the buggy side. They shake

hands. She looks good to him. The same bright eyes, wavy brown hair and cheerful manner of old.

"She looked up at him and said, 'Bill, where are you stopping?'

"He said, 'Over at my Cousin John's.'

" 'Well, if you don't mind,' she said, 'I am going to get in and ride over with you.'

"Now, in heaven's name, I ask, what answer will he make her?'

We laughed but he did not. He looked sad as if cast down by this difficult situation.

We sat by the fireside, he drinking hot Scotch and smoking long cigars and telling one story after another, until half after four, when the shades of night began to fall. Then he turned to me and asked for the hour. I told him. He said:

"I have to go up to dine with Mr. and Mrs. Henry Rogers this evening, and before I go I must shave and change my clothes. Please let me know when it is a quarter to five."

He went on telling of his amazing adventures on his trip around the world. He was a born actor. He dramatized these stories in a fashion that held and thrilled us.

A quarter of five came and I touched his elbow and reminded him of the time. He seemed to be a little irritated, for he was right in the midst of a delightful story.

COMING UP THE ROAD

He said, feeling his chin, "Boys, do you think that I need shaving?"

We said, "Oh, no, you don't need shaving; you are all right."

"Well, then," he said, "let me know when it is five o'clock."

Five o'clock arrived and he was then telling the most remarkable story that he had yet told. Again I reminded him of the hour.

He said, "Boys, do you think that they would put me out if I went there in these clothes?"

"Oh, no," we answered. "You are welcome in any clothes, anywhere and at any time."

"Well then," he said, "I am going to finish this story. You let me know when it is a quarter after five."

When that moment arrived, he rose from his chair very slowly. His clothes were covered with cigar ashes, the droppings of the afternoon. His vest had been his ash receiver. He began to brush himself off, and to say in a drawling tone—"Well, I have been here since one o'clock and I have talked all the time, and I have enjoyed every damn' word of it."

I think that our colored cook must have been running a restaurant in Green or Thompson Street. We soon found that two pounds of steak for each man was not enough for a meal. The expense of

furnishing our table increased prodigiously. Yet the boys were so attached to Walter that they couldn't part with him. It is as difficult to subject a crowd of poets to business methods as it is to break a wild horse. Such vulgar considerations are not for them. Therein is the reason why experiments like that of *The Sign o' the Lanthorne* break down.

We found it necessary to take in some business men to help pay expenses. The light of our *Lanthorne* grew dim and flickered out, but not until we had given a Thanksgiving dinner with William Dean Howells, Edward Eggleston, Richard Henry Stoddard, Stedman and others at our table. We had waiters from a famous Fulton Street restaurant. They got drunk on our wine, and it was far from being the care-free, delightful evening we had planned. It was, at least, exciting and memorable.

My younger brother Wilbur had been with me in business for some years. He was an able and ingenious man. He gave to our enterprise some new and brilliant ideas which doubled our income. He was a far abler business man than I. We were getting along toward ample financial competence with a few thousand dollars drawing interest in the Kings County Trust Company. In such circumstances, if a man has a weakness it is

apt to show itself. We had a hereditary longing for good horses. In the land of our birth almost every man had more horses than oats. We bought some promising colts and put them in training. More of our substance than we knew went into this kind of folly. The truth is we had come to that time of peril known to every successful man. It is the time when many temptations fall upon him not the least of which are side-issues.

Our surplus began to worry us. Couldn't we make it earn more than four per cent.? My brother got a great idea for a weekly advertising journal. It was a unique and interesting idea. If his strength had held out it would have succeeded. But his strength failed. A weekly journal has a great capacity for absorbing funds. After some months my brother had to give up his work. I sold the advertising journal. The buyers could not make it go. It was a mangy-looking cat when it came back to me. The hard times of 1894 had come. It was strangling many a worthy enterprise. I killed the cat and threw it overboard. With depleted resources I had much worry on my hands to keep my little ship under way and in safe water. Much competition had arisen.

For years I had had S. S. McClure and his able helper, John Phillips, to compete with. They were a strong team whose ideas had helped to develop

the field on sound lines. Now McClure's success and my own had convinced many clever newspaper men that a fortune could be made in the business. They were flooding the market with new ideas. Our way was becoming more and more difficult. Still, if I had kept my surplus intact I could have held my customers with an improving service. In 1895 I helped to organize a company that took over my plant. The business management was given to a good fellow whose one idea was time-worn and venerable. It was that of saving and cutting expenses. We needed a careful student of the situation—a man of the youth, the vigor, the originality which had been mine five years before. Our manager, however able, was not the man for us. He weighed two hundred forty pounds. He was an immobile man resigned to fatness and middle age and the failing strength that goes with them. The rapid scouting from ocean to ocean, the conferring and arguing by day and night, which I had done, were not for him. He made no contracts. He had a deep distrust of every new idea. He wore me out with opposition.

Yet he was my friend. I was fond of him. I yielded when I should have been firm. I had not the heart to fight it out with him as I should have done in the interest of those who had put their money in the enterprise. Unfortunately, the latter

were in sympathy with the business manager's policy of economical plodding. They did not know, as I did, that in the newspaper syndicate business we were in constant need of sky-rockets. No kind of publishing puts such a tax on the ingenuity of an editor. We were slow in paying our foreign contributors and we lost them. Kipling and Doyle had been of inestimable value to us.

The sky was full of war clouds. Cuba, which had been a pest-hole, was the storm center of the world.

Stephen Crane, who had been sending us delightful sketches from Mexico, had gone to Jacksonville and was to seize the first opportunity to get across to Cuba. We gave him seven hundred dollars in Spanish gold to be carried in a chamois-skin belt on his person. He was to send us articles from the island as often as possible and if war came he was to write of that. He was detained in Jacksonville more than a month. From what happened later I judge that he fell in love with a young woman there and married her. We sent a number of drafts for his expenses in this period of waiting.

He got off at last with Scovel, the *World* correspondent in a tug-boat chartered by the latter. She was either a rotten old hulk or else she was practically scuttled before she left shore so that her bottom dropped out of her as soon as she began

to jump in heavy seas. Far out Stephen and Scovel and the crew had to fight their way back in an open boat. They were overturned on the rocks off-shore. Stephen had to throw away his gold and a part of his garments to get in and was near losing his life at that. Soon the thrilling tale of *The Open Boat* came to us. We sold it to *Scribner's Magazine* for three hundred fifty dollars.

We could afford to speculate no further on the chance of getting Stephen into Cuba. He was eager to go there and made a contract with William R. Hearst for whom his many war adventures were written. The last, great, shining star had fallen out of our sky.

Days of anxiety came upon me. I knew that our ship was doomed. I began to wonder how I should get ashore when the evil hour came. I began to write of the scenes and people I had known in my boyhood. I was feeling my way toward a novel. At last I had some good incidents rather loosely connected in a kind of story. As I think of it now I am reminded of a string about half filled with beads varying in size, shape and color. Some of them were rather handsome beads. There were bits of description in the story as vivid as any writing I have done. But I had not yet learned how to work toward a climax so that every character should have his task and every incident some value

in the making of it. Full of hope, I took my manuscript to Boston on a business trip. I went to see my friend, Walter H. Page, then editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*. I spent the night with him at his home in Cambridge—a delightful home, the children then in their youth.

He showed a friendly interest in my literary ambition. He took my manuscript and said that he would read it himself within a week or so. This he did. His letter told me in kindly words the exact truth about it. There was excellent material and some good writing in the story, but it lacked structure and coherence. I worked on the tale in my hours of leisure. One day I took it to Gilder at the *Century* office. He had begun to take some interest in my literary efforts and had published one of my ballads. He spoke kindly of the story but had no use for it. His talk rather discouraged me. The trail to literary distinction was steep and hard those days.

We were on the verge of war with Spain. We had little to contribute to this absorbing theme. Our work was becoming more and more difficult. Slowly we had drifted into bad weather. I had small heart for the problems of the office.

Meanwhile I was losing faith in my capacity to earn a living by literary work. I wondered what I should do. The supple strength and confidence

of youth were gone. I had a wife who had bravely fared along the way with me from hard to better days. I could not bear to tell her of the fear in my heart. Yet she knew of it. My mother and sister and others were depending on me for help. Through it all I kept a courageous countenance. No word of discouragement passed my lips. The truth is, I was like one who has swum in deep water until he is weary, with no shore in sight. In such a situation a man is likely to grasp at straws, and that is what I did. I joined a number of artists and literary men in a desperate gamble. Our faith in it was established by a lot of mutual bracing. We started a weekly paper for young people. We built up an attractive plan for it. The writers and artists were to furnish copy and pictures, to be paid for out of possible profits. There were three or four of us who furnished five thousand dollars in cash to the enterprise. That sum, we reckoned, would carry us to a point where we could decide whether success or failure was ahead of our venture. Before we knew it we had spent our capital and were some five thousand dollars in debt. When we gave up, as we were bound to do, many creditors were clamoring for pay. My associate backers vanished. They went into hiding. They had to work for a living. They could not be bothered with insistent collectors. I had some

credit. I could not run. I faced the matter squarely, met the creditors and reassured them. They were generous to me. Men will be generous to any one who shows a disposition to do the right thing. It may interest certain of these good fellows, whom I have rarely seen since then, to know that I settled with every creditor within three months. Again it was my first employer, the good man, Louis Klopsch, who helped me to do it.

Now, soon after these troubles were composed, our syndicate had a proposition from the owner of one of the great magazines. He wished to secure my services and would consider taking over our business, as an auxiliary of his own, if I would go with him on a contract for two years. Soon he bought our plant, the consideration being an agreement on his part to pay its debts in full. I now had debts of my own, but as I was to get a good salary I could comfortably meet them.

My closest associate on the editorial staff of the magazine was George Churchill, a big, handsome, young graduate of Amherst who afterward became its professor of English. Suddenly the *Maine* was ruined and sunk by a bomb in Havana Harbor. The explosion of that bomb shook the nation. Joseph I. C. Clark's great ballad of *The Fighting Race* began its travels. War was declared against Spain.

If I remember rightly it was in the early spring of 1897 that I went to the great war training-camp at Chickamauga to write something for the magazine. First I went to Washington for my army and navy passports. In the Navy Department I met Theodore Roosevelt, then a slim and rather undersized young man. He was the assistant secretary. His tremendous energy interested me. His restless intellect gave his tongue no chance for repose. He was talking vigorously and constantly to some one. The respect for silence and weighed words which I had got from those Yankees of the north country gave me an unfavorable impression of the man. In time I came to know that his words were never empty.

At Chickamauga I had a tent at the headquarters of the grim, scarred old warrior of the plains, General Guy V. Henry. He was then in command of the Tenth Calvary—a colored regiment of stalwart magnificent men. Physically I have never seen the like of those tall, silent, broad-shouldered fighting men. When in the evening I sat chatting with the kindly old general, a hundred camp-fires burning in the dark valley, the tall trumpeter would come at nine, and, standing proudly erect, would fill the great valley with the call of Taps. How clear and mellow were those notes that set the echoes flying over the hushed

camp and the countless graves of the Union dead. Never have I heard such a trumpeter.

Soon with the famous generals, O. O. Howard and Joe Wheeler, I set out for the big encampment at Tampa. Howard was a genial soul who loved to tell stories of thrilling adventure in the old war. He was a kind of father to the boys and was indeed seriously concerned for the welfare of their souls. He was of an evangelistic turn of mind. The white-bearded Joe Wheeler, called "Fighting Joe," was a man of gentle manners and few words.

We got to the Tampa Bay hotel at night. There I found Ed Marshall, Stephen Crane, Richard Harding Davis, Fred Remington and other men I knew. General Shafter and his staff were quartered in that immense caravansary. The boys were waiting for the army to move into the enemy's country. As to the plans of the War Department no one of them had any knowledge. They were indulging in talk and poker and drinking-bouts. They had little to do but take photographs and keep in touch with headquarters and wait for news. I wandered about the camp and got its color and some good stories. Suddenly I was summoned back to New York. My chief—a West Point man—said that he had inside information that the army would not move for a month. It moved within three days. So I did not get to Cuba. In New

York I took up the routine to which I had been accustomed.

My chief was a singular man. He was able, ingenious and good-hearted. Moreover his success had been remarkable. We had long been friends. Now and then a curious change came over him. His face would be pale, his brow clouded. His usual self-restraint had left him. He was quite another man—irascible, profane, rude, abusive to those who were doing their best for him. Many good men had come and gone having tried to serve this master. The ex-editors were so numerous that the matter had become a joke in the clubs of the city. One morning this alter ego of the chief came to the office. He violently denounced the force. I left the shop. He followed me, apologizing for his rudeness. There were tears in his eyes. The gentleman had returned to that trembling form of the chief. These swift vital changes in his nature were beyond his control. I like to think of him as the delightful good fellow I had known socially for years.

He urged me to return to my desk. I did not do it. It had long been apparent to me that I should fail to give him good value for my salary in the work I was doing. I did not feel at home in the place, partly because I had been my own master for so long a time. I begged the chief to

release me from the contract I had made with him and he generously complied with my wishes.

A definite plan and one that looked promising had come to me for a novel. We were living in a little flat in Tarrytown where we had some good friends. My restful wandering in the wooded hills and river valley with Ed Bacon, a nature lover, I can never forget. I sat by my open window those delightful days and began my story. It ran on like a brook hurrying downward from its source, lingering here and there in shady pools and growing as it flowed until it was like a river. Those were the best days I have known when, with the stream well started, its natural current seemed to carry me along with no sense of effort. The brook knew its way.

If this is taking the matter too seriously, dear reader, I apologize. I am a child lover, and children were denied me save those of my brain.

I began my work in the morning. In the middle of the afternoon I would be growing weary. Then my wife and I with our pet dog would wander into Sleepy Hollow or on the old canal bank into the grateful shade of the green woods. In the evening I read to her what I had written. Frank but always sympathetic, her judgment was helpful and often of great value to me. Soon we began to feel that something real was coming into my script.

A friend invited us to go to his cottage on the shore of a beautiful river in the Adirondack wilderness. Its long stretch of still water was bordered by flowering lily-pads. A little way below our camp was a deep noisy rock-gorge. We went there living two weeks in the virgin forest with only a guide, who was an excellent cook, for company. There in the silent woods close to the heart of nature, my cares fell away like a loosened garment. I wrote every morning as I had never written. I had found my way. In the afternoons we tramped off on the pleasant trails with a blanket and a volume of Balzac. On some lovely bed of creeping linea and mosses we would spread our blanket and sit down to talk or read aloud to each other. We returned in the early twilight when the song of the hermit thrush was pealing through the woodlands. In the evening we went out deer-seeing in a canoe.

A pair of phoebe-birds had built their nest on a timber of our veranda. We watched them a part of every day while they reared their young in the crowded nest. One of the latter died and with great caution I removed him from the family group. The most interesting process we saw was the watering of the young birds. The old ones accomplished this with dripping, spongy bits of bark fiber from which the moisture fell into the

open, eager mouths of the young. Later came the lessons in flying when the mother phœbe stood at the edge of the nest waving her wings. We saw them venture forth at last and climb a tall beech by a ladder of small branches. Those two weeks were of unexpected value to me and my task, for *Eben Holden* depended largely for its effect on my love and knowledge of the woods. After a delightful visit with my mother and sister in the old home we returned to our little flat in Tarrytown.

I had written most of the journey through the woods in *Eben Holden* when the pleasant task was suddenly interrupted. A telegram came from Joseph Pulitzer, the brilliant proprietor of the *New York World* inviting me to spend a day with him at Narragansett Pier. I was surprised that he knew of me. Undoubtedly my friend, Don Seitz, business manager of the *World*, or my other friend, John L. Heaton, a writer for its editorial page, had been recommending my humble talents to their chief. I had been worried more or less since giving up my salary by fear of the future. I was somewhat in debt. I had not more than two or three hundred dollars in the bank. So I accepted Mr. Pulitzer's invitation and went to Narragansett Pier. There I met the great editor, who then wore a full beard, David Graham Phillips, a tall, hand-

some young man of some thirty years, Doctor Hosmer, Mr. Pulitzer's friend, adviser and private physician, and two or three others. The distinguished editor was most genial. His vision had been much impaired. He was almost blind. At luncheon he asked for my opinion of the editorial page of the *World*.

"I do not read it," I answered.

Every one at the table sat up and looked at me. The guests were shocked. Mr. Pulitzer's expression of surprise gave way to one of amusement.

"Pardon me," I said, "but the truth is editorials rarely interest me."

"That is an extraordinary statement," Mr. Phillips exclaimed.

Mr. Pulitzer turned upon him suddenly with one of those vigorous and unexpected remarks often quoted by his associates.

"By God, sir, I am glad to hear it. The more of that kind of thing we hear the better."

He knew what my words implied—that no editorial page in New York had the wit and charm and brilliancy to command the interest of the average citizen.

After luncheon he asked me to sit down for a talk with him. He said that the Sunday *World* was not as interesting as he would like it to be. He asked me if I would make a careful study of

it and submit to him within a week or so a plan for its improvement.

This I did and was engaged at a handsome salary to be Sunday editor of the *World*. I began my work under Bradford Merrill, the editorial manager, with two little tales which I had intended to write for the magazine. One was the singular story of the cunning brain and quick-shooting hand of that Carlyle-School Indian known as "The Apache Kid," which an old scout had told me at Chickamauga. They were vivid tales and they made an impression.

I found my work to be both agreeable and successful. The whole staff welcomed me. My able helpers became my friends. An honored member of the faculty of St. Lawrence University, Professor Charles Kelsey Gaines—a man of rare literary taste and skill, now famous as the author of a great tale of ancient life entitled *Gorgo*—had long been my assistant in the editorial work of the syndicate. Soon he came to do special writing for the *World Magazine*. His vivid review of Admiral Dewey's career and its climax in Manila Harbor, was one of the admirable things he did for me. I can not forget the thrilling pictures which Dan Smith and I invented for our first pages. His rare gifts of imagination and craftsmanship were of great service to me.

I had submitted the unfinished journey through the woods in my new novel to *The Youth's Companion* and to *St. Nicholas*, as the beginning of a tale for boys. Both had returned it with kind words. It was hard to break through the impregnable line of hard-boiled editors. I put the manuscript away in a drawer, glad that I was not depending on it for my bread. *St. Nicholas* had accepted a little inconsequential tale of mine, but they had no room for this longer and better thing. Often I have observed that the judgment of editors is likely to fall down at the precise time when they could render a service of the first importance to their stockholders. Careless and dyspeptic editors have turned down many of the big things that have come to their hands. *The Red Badge* and *David Harum* are instances within my own knowledge. *The Red Badge* was soiled here and there with grammatical errors. I wonder if they looked more important to the big editors than the immortal quality behind them.

One day Walter Page sent for me. Doubleday Page and Company were just beginning their career. He was in his office on Union Square. He told me of their ideals and plans. He said that they would be glad to have me join them and add my bit to theirs in building up what he hoped would be a great business. I felt deeply the friendly confidence of Page, but I had to decline his offer,

for I could not think that I ought to leave Mr. Pulitzer for another editorial job.

I had been in my new place almost a year and a half. My usefulness was recognized and I enjoyed my work and associations. One day a letter came from Elbridge S. Brooks, my old comrade of the *Brooklyn Daily Times*. It was a fateful letter. He was the editor for a publishing house which had succeeded handsomely in making books for young people. They were now seeking good novels for the general public. He expressed confidence in my talent for literary invention. Had I a novel in mind or in manuscript which I could submit to him? I gathered up those typewritten sheets of the opening chapters of *Eben Holden*, in which I had lost hope and interest since their rejection by two editors. I sent them on to him—about twenty-five thousand words at a guess. I had no notion that anything would come of it. Suddenly this telegram arrived:

We are delighted with the first chapters of your novel. Can you not go to work at once and finish the story as soon as possible? Answer.

BROOKS.

My answer was:

This job exhausts my strength and time. Impossible to do as you wish unless your faith would warrant you in making an advance on royalties

sufficient to give me comfort while I complete the task begun. If so I could perhaps get a leave of absence for three months.

To my astonishment they were willing to gamble on my talents. They wished to know how large was the advance I required. My wife and I conferred. Our demand, like our plan of life, was modest. Here at last was the chance to satisfy the urge within me to put my humble talent to the test. We would not discourage them. With economy we thought that we could see it through for three hundred dollars. I so notified them and immediately they accepted the proposition. Now came the problem of getting the proposed leave of absence. I went to see Mr. Pulitzer at his great house uptown. I told him of my wishes. His gentle serenity was a bit disturbed. He said to me:

"I told you when you came to us that we wanted men who would stay with us. You are just beginning to be useful. What is on your mind?"

"Mr. Pulitzer," I said in a tone of irony, "I am going to write the Great American Novel, of the need of which so much has been said."

He leaned back and roared with laughter. It amused him that one of my position and prospects should be wasting his time with a venture in which not one in a thousand could hope for success. It was the acknowledged route to starvation and rags.

The street was full of penny-a-liners in seedy garments and run-down shoes, who had been ruined by that bug in their brains.

I arose depressed by a sense of my folly and of defeat. He came and affectionately put his arm around my shoulder. Then as he had done before, he made a pathetic effort to see my face. He was one of the kindest of men.

"Bacheller, I will not stand in the way of your ambition," he said. "Get this out of your system and then come back to us. We shall have a place for you."

I thanked this man and left him and saw him not again. He was, I think, the most brilliant journalist of my time, whose influence was nationwide and whose service to the public was inestimable. A friend of his has told me that my *Keeping up with Lizzie* cheered his last days.

I was newly impressed with the fact that all the probabilities were against me. Still my discouragement was short-lived. It is curious how obstinate I am. Once started in a way that I think is right I can not turn back until I see the end of it.

I first went to the Astor Library and read the newspapers and magazines of the time of which I was to write. I learned what the people of those days were thinking and talking about. I studied the characters likely to be useful to me, especially

THE HIGH-BROW DECADE

that of Greeley. When I began writing, the story came fast. My wife learned to use a typewriter and every week she copied my script for me. Often I found her laughing or in tears as she sat at her task.

"What is the matter?" I would inquire.

"Oh, I am thoroughly in love with these people," she would say. "I laugh with them and when they are sad, I am sad."

Those were happy days for us. We knew that we were having a delightful experience and that a story with the breath of life in it was coming along. Yet we had no great expectations. I knew that a book which sold five thousand copies was successful; that ten thousand copies would create a ready market for any good thing the author could write. In our most optimistic moments we dared not hope for a sale of more than twenty thousand copies. The narrative was moving on at a pace so secure that while I was making a trip to Detroit and other cities I continued my writing in Pullman cars and hotel bedrooms.

My leave of absence was nearing its end. Some ninety thousand words had been written and sent on to the publishers. Still the story was not finished. Brooks arrived in town. He phoned that he must see me at once. Would we go to dinner with him that evening? We met him at Pabst's in

One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street near where we lived.

"We all agree that you have written a delightful and important novel," he said. "It reminds me of Kingsley's *Westward Ho*. My feeling is that it just narrowly misses being a great novel although the public *may* call it great."

That is what he said with many other things. He wished me to add a humorous fishing adventure for Uncle Eb, which I did or tried to do. He also asked me to authorize him to print certain passages which I had lined out in the typed text. To our surprise he wished to make a contract for another novel at an advance double that he had paid me on *Eben Holden*.

A few days later I met the publisher, Mr. Harry Morrell, and his helper, Myron T. Pritchard, of Boston. I proposed a novel of real adventure in the second war with the British whose background should be the old French colony of northern New York, in which Napoleon I and his brother Charles were deeply interested.

"The novel you have is a rather quiet chronicle of country life and character," I said. "I would not expect it to be very popular. The novel I propose could be full of stirring adventure. It ought to sell."

They agreed with me. Such was the beginning

of the enterprise entitled, *D'ri and I*, and so it happened that I did not return to the *World*.

That day we three discussed different titles for the novel in hand. It was Myron T. Pritchard of Morrell's staff who suggested the name *Eben Holden*. We agreed on that and later I added the subtitle: *A Tale of the North Country*.

The book was published July 11, 1900. The best newspapers began to give it columns of flattering comment. Within a month letters were coming to me from William Dean Howells, E. C. Stedman, Mary Wilkins, Walter Page, Harriet Prescott Spofford, Senator Hoar and others, hailing the book as a creditable performance. Andrew Carnegie sent me his congratulations and invited us to his castle in northern Scotland. Invitations came pouring in upon us from clubs and literary societies. Publishers were calling on me. Suddenly we found ourselves in a new kind of world.

I was walking on Seventeenth Street one morning when some one touched my arm. Turning I saw Gilder and Johnson of the *Century*.

"Why did you go to Boston for a publisher?" Gilder asked.

I loved the man and did not tell him, as perhaps I should have done, that the best part of my novel had long before gone in and out of the *Century* office unrecognized.

Later he bought the serial rights of *D'ri and I* for his great magazine.

Eben Holden was in strong demand. In September I went with Morrell to the Maine woods for a time of rest. Before we left he told me that he had ordered seventy-five thousand copies to be printed and bound. He was one of the ablest, keenest publishers I have known. It is a pity that his success led him into certain speculations which seriously embarrassed him.

When we returned, a thousand copies a day were going out to the trade. In a little time four thousand a day were being sold. The presses of a great printing house were running continuously to keep up with the demand. In six months the sales were nearly three hundred thousand copies. Morrell voluntarily increased my royalty rate—a credit to his generosity and his judgment.

My mother died when I was with her in my sister's home in Canton during the Christmas week of 1900. She had read *Eben Holden*, having learned of its great success. She spoke kindly of it, but betrayed no enthusiasm. She had the old fear of spoiling her son with conceit.

D'ri and I was written under pressure and completed before the midsummer of 1901. I was worn out when we sailed for England late in July. I had been writing of French people, and my French

was rusty after twenty years of disuse. Brooks, one of my ablest and most valued friends, had lost his health and passed away. I warned Pritchard and Morrell that certain words and phrases which I had employed to give atmosphere to the tale would need careful and competent revision. They promised to see that it was done. In the pressure of their work, this matter, of prime importance to author and publisher, was overlooked. As a result of their carelessness—not of my own—I was subjected to needless criticism. The book was having a large sale, but I insisted on stopping the presses while certain changes were made in the plates. I have suffered not a little from the undue haste of publishers to turn my work into money. Nothing I have done has quite satisfied me. *Dawn* comes the nearest to my ideal in style and plan, but I could have done better with more time. I love the toil that goes with a good task.

I have cultivated tramps and other curious people for color. I have had amusing adventures with them. Vividly I recall an evening when I went into Huber's Dime Museum on Fourteenth Street. An elderly man in a dress suit was introducing the fat lady, the living skeleton and other freaks in rhyme. When his work was finished I invited him to go out to dinner with me. This he did. The man had a serious regard for himself as a poet and

an actor. He had toured the provinces of England with a "one-act version of *Macbeth*." He talked of his art and led up to his unique achievement. It was a poem with a rhyme in it for the word *orange*, and another for the word *month*. He was "the one and only poet" who had reached that cold and lonely height. He had learned that there was a Hindu book of etiquette called a grunth and a province in Wales known as the Bloringe. He recited the poem which I named *The Suctorious Mogul*. It was the following quatrain:

"From the Indies to the Bloringe
The Grand Mogul came in a month.
On the way he sucked an orange
While he also read a grunth."

"Oh, it's an art," he said, as I complimented him. I have since learned that it is an ancient rhyme, but it is not the less interesting on that account. I have never known a literary thief of a grosser taste than that of the freak master.

And now I have little more to say of this poor life of mine. My readers have been many. Nothing in what I have written has offended them save it be the need of better art. Full of error and sorrow and failure, it has been on the whole a most happy life. Many of the debts of my youth were paid as I could pay them. Certain of these I could

THE HIGH-BROW DECADE

not pay, for when I was ready to discharge the debt, those I owed were gone where money is of no value. With the keenest regret I think of them. I am comforted when I think of the many who have died in debt to me. They represent a sum far greater than I can ever possess.

I have seen the growing of the cities. I have felt the thirst for learning in the young. I have seen the building and development of schools and colleges to satisfy it. I have beheld, coming out of them, the army of youth going forth to an endless war against Ignorance, Prejudice and licensed Fraud. These ancient enemies of man on our soil were put to flight. They are still retreating.

The new army rebuilt the structure of our commerce. On sound character they established our credit system. They demanded that every business benefit its customers and environment as well as its proprietor. To them belongs the credit for higher wages, a lowered cost of production, greater prosperity and a wider distribution of its benefits. In many laboratories, they have made discoveries and inventions which have relieved or banished certain of our ills and increased the comfort and efficiency of life and the understanding of human beings. Their charities have astonished the world.

Fabulous wealth has come to the great nations. Evils have come with it. Their correction is the

COMING UP THE ROAD

problem of our time. A world without problems would be a spineless place unworthy of being the habitation of men.

The sowing for this unexampled harvest began with my starting up the road. Therefore I venture to hope that these memories of the strong, great-hearted sowers in the days of my youth may have some value.

THE END





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